THE PASSION

M. J. OLLIVIER, O.P.

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THE PASSION

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Historical Essay

By

R. P. M. J. OLLIVIER, O. P.

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The author, while writing this work, had in mind all those whom God afflicts in mind or body, and to these it is now dedicated.

Jerusalem, 2 July, 1890.
Feast of the Visitation.

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Introduction

I

THERE is no study more interesting or more profitable to the Christian than that of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Even if we only consider the narrative of the Sufferings and Death of Our Lord, with regard to what is thrilling therein, we must still give it the first place amongst all reading capable of affecting souls and even of exciting them. And if we aim at elevating them, — at inspiring them with a liking for robust virtue, — teaching them to understand the meaning of trial and expiation, and inspiring them with confidence in God, joined to a desire to be united to Him in a holy abandonment, — what counsel could equal in effect that preaching of which so many hearts have felt the charm and have submitted to its allurement?

The knowledge of Christ Crucified,[1] to use the words of Saint Paul, is by far the most necessary knowledge for the Christian, no matter what may be the state of his soul in the sight of God. The sinner learns from it to hope for pardon, and to detest sin. Those who are still faithful, but disturbed by the seductions of Evil, behold therein at what cost the Divine Victim will atone for their sin. Those who are stronger, but yet who are lukewarm, will find therein a powerful incentive to self-renunciation, to mortification, to contempt for this transitory world and the fleeting things of Time.

[1] I Cor. ii. 2. "For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Those who are raised through the grace of a Higher Vocation and a more exact correspondence with grace to the practice of the Evangelical Counsels, will be strengthened in the love of humiliation, of desolation, and of suffering, at the sight of the abandonment wherein the Son of David, the Redeemer and King of Israel, dies upon a cross.[1]

Above all, if we compare the Divinity of Our Lord with the abasement to which He condescends, and when by meditation we are enabled to measure the immensity of the love whence results this abjection, — are we not both frightened and consoled, or crushed rather, and yet, at the same time, uplifted to the highest hope and charity when we reflect that we are the objects of that Love, and the cause of that Death?

But, as can be easily understood, the more deeply we penetrate into the Mystery of our Redemption, the more surely and efficaciously will this work be accomplished in our souls. To effect this, we should begin by the attentive consideration of the incidents relating to the expiation of our sins; that expiation which it has pleased Our Divine Lord to accomplish in His twofold Agony of Gethsemane and Calvary.

II

To help in the good work, we now offer this book to the public, in the desire that it may be of use to all, and feeling assured that it will prove so to

[1] "Nam ex profundo corde, et totis viscerum medullis eam (passionem Jesu Christi) perscrutanti, multi passus insperati occurrerent, ex quibus novam compassionem, novum amorem, novas consolationes, et per consequens novum quemdam statum dulcedinis susciperet, quæ sibi præsagia et participalia gloriæ viderentur." LUDOLPH, *Vita Jesu Christi*, pars ii, c. lviii, 1.

some. It would be impossible to lessen the charm of such a subject to the degree that it would cease to influence and to profit the reader; and, on the other hand, some feature, hitherto left in the background, can always be brought into relief, in such a manner as to give it fresh charm and fresh usefulness. The Gospel is a boundless world wherein it is always easy to make fortunate discoveries. The Narrative of the Passion affords the same opportunities to those who give it serious attention. Books on this subject abound; all different; all useful; all incomplete, that is to say, all leaving an immense field to be explored; an inexhaustible mine to be worked. We hope to have advanced a few steps, and to have taken from the lode some grains of the gold which God has deposited therein. But such an instruction could not be attempted in its entirety with the same chance of success as a study restricted to one particular point of view. This has been understood by nearly all the writers on the Passion of Our Lord. If there have been some who attempted an exposition of the subject at once doctrinal and historical, they sacrificed, of necessity, one or other of the two elements, if, indeed, the result attained was not to weaken both. For this reason, the present work is historical only, and confined to a recital of the details, as they are attested by the Gospel itself, Catholic tradition, or contemporary history. This statement requires explanation.

III

The Gospel, it is said, is very sparing of detail, and consequently seems to neglect a multitude of facts and circumstances respecting which we lack precise

information, or information, as is said, at first hand. This is an error easily refuted. The Gospel was written for readers who did not require these explanations, since they lived at the same time and in the same place as Our Lord Himself.[1] The Evangelists had nothing to explain; they were at once understood. To complete the narrative of the Synoptists,[2] the Jews had their ancient customs and the Sacred Writings from which they sought information on everything that the daily routine of life and the ordinary teaching could not tell them. It was almost the same with the Greeks and the Romans who had intermingled with the Syrians, the Asiatic neighbors of Palestine.[3] According as the preaching of the Apostles extended, commentaries became more necessary, it is true; but for a long time, they did not extend beyond a very narrow circuit, as may be seen by the Gospel of Saint John,[4] so little different from the Synoptists in this respect. Rome and Jerusalem were both characterized by such stability and such conservatism that it was long before there was any change.

The Gospels explain themselves, therefore, at first sight, that is to say, their language, in its conciseness, has all the clearness and even all the fulness to be desired,[5] for those who are sufficiently acquainted with the manners and literature of the Jews, Greeks, and Romans of that period.

[1] Saint Matthew wrote his Gospel about the year 41; Saint Mark, in 47 or 48; Saint Luke, in 51 or 53; Saint John himself wrote for the contemporaries of Our Saviour.

[2] The name given to the three first Evangelists.

[3] CHEVALLIER, *Récits évangéliques;* Introduction, p. 17.

[4] Written between the years 78 and 95, nearer to the latter, in the opinion of several. Le Camus (*Vie de N.-S. J.-C.* 45) supposes the year 80.

[5] CHEVALLIER, *Récits évangéliques;* Introduction, p. 8.

The Old Testament is a commentary, in anticipation, on *the New*, as complete a commentary as can be desired, especially at the present time, when Biblical studies have made such marvellous progress, and with such happy results.

We are now familiar with the daily life of the Israelites, both public and private; we live with them as if we were their contemporaries, no longer debarred, as Gentiles, from entering the Inner Court.

It is the same with regard to the Greeks and Romans, with whose laws and customs we are perfectly acquainted. We follow them through the Land of Israel, step by step, if we may so speak. The sympathy or the hatred with which they meet, is equally as well known to us as to themselves; and we could give an account of it before Cæsar or the Senate with as much confidence as the Procurators or Tribunes who had returned from their mission in Palestine.

There is evidently some obscurity on a few points of secondary importance, but there is a sufficiently vivid light upon the whole to leave us but little regret for what escapes us. In this manner, with History aiding the exegesis, the Gospel becomes a book the words of which gain in clearness, precision, and import, at every fresh glance. It repays all the attention it receives by a progressive knowledge, and an ever increasing security which, before long, produces perfect certainty.

IV

The study of the Gospels is singularly aided by the labors of the Rabbis in the *Talmuds*[1] and the unchangeableness of the East.

In their eagerness to collect the traditions of the Ancients and the commentaries of the Scribes, the Rabbis[2] have accumulated a medley of the most varied and contradictory documents. But amongst this rubbish, as in that of Ennius, there are some pearls, which to us are riches. We owe the compilers of the *Talmuds* no gratitude for these, for they labored against Jesus Christ and His Disciples; but they have, none the less, brought more than one stone to the pedestal upon which the Cross to-day rises triumphant, and though not worthy to be called corner-stones,[3] still several are of exceptional value. Often, the sacred Text finds its justification in the Rabbinical elucidations; at times even, its real meaning only becomes known to us through them, and the ray which guides us comes from that lamp which they scarcely intended should light our path.

On the other hand, nothing changes in the East, neither men nor customs, notwithstanding the upheavals which have aided the work of the centuries. Even the places retain their aspect, so little changed

[1] The *Talmud* of Jerusalem and that of Babylon. Here the expression is applied to the whole of the Rabbinical works. Compare LEDRAIN, *Hist. d'Israël*, vol. ii. p. 453, and following.

[2] They must not be confounded with the Levites or the Priests. Rabbinism, in itself, has nothing in common with the priesthood. The Rabbi is a clerk, if you will, in the sense of *littérateur* or *savant*, but not in the sense of *ecclesiastic*. Since the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, Judaism has no longer sacrifice or priesthood.

[3] MATTHEW xxi. 42.

that the imagination has no great difficulty in reconstructing the staging of the great Dramas of the Past. The nature of the soil, above all in Judea, and more particularly in Jerusalem, allows the visitor to kiss with joy and confidence the foot-prints of the Saviour. If rubbish disfigures the original aspect in one respect, in a hundred others it remains unchanged even by the force of circumstances. Besides, in the East, ruins have the advantage of determining recollections, and even when they form the ground-work of other ruins not so important and of more recent date, the place which they hallow is none the less marked.

The Romans were in the habit of rebuilding the edifices which they destroyed, and of using the débris of the former building as the foundation. There are numerous examples of this custom. The Jews of Palestine observed the same rule, and modern Orientals adhere to it faithfully, with this difference, however, that the Romans, in rebuilding, enlarged and beautified, whilst the Israelites and the Arabs more often are satisfied with the original appearance and proportions. Hence, their towns change very little in appearance; and in the Jerusalem of the present day, for example, it is not very difficult to recognize the Jerusalem of our Lord.[1]

V

Interminable discussions have been raised by *savants* as to the identification of certain places; of Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre in particular. But it would be impossible for us not to understand the

[1] All travellers are struck by the unchangeableness of the East, and to quote any one in particular would be useless.

reason of this dispute, more or less polite, between Protestants and Catholics, especially between Rationalists and Christians. As long as it was not a question of faith in Christ the Redeemer, the authenticity of the Holy Places was not impugned. It has been challenged for the purpose of embarrassing Catholic belief, and destroying the veneration paid to the sacred relics of the Redemption. In vain, the Gospel, History, Tradition, alike render the most exact and concordant testimony. Some erroneous or doubtful statements, such as are always added in the course of ages to the primitive accounts, afforded arguments for the contemptuous rejection of the whole. These cavillers were regarded as great scholars, because they blustered a great deal. Christian writers, particularly Catholics, hastened to take up the gauntlet, which they regarded as thrown in all seriousness.

These writers for the defence produced, from time to time, with hesitation, arguments which they themselves showed from the beginning that they considered insufficient. If some amongst them ventured to deny positively the heretical quibbles, they were regarded as rash persons whom it was right to disown. A reaction is taking place in the present day, but slowly, and with marked diffidence on the part of the Catholics. It would almost seem as if it were painful to them to be in the right.[1]

Be this as it may, we have plenty of undisputed material for this work, as the reader will admit. We have not devoted much space to these wranglers; but on the other hand, we have afforded ample to profitable discussions so as to prove the value of the guaran-

[1] In justice, we must acknowledge that this reaction is mainly owing to the efforts of English and American Protestants.

tees on which our convictions are based. We do not want to urge them unduly; we desire that they should, of themselves, carry weight.

VI

The discretion which guided us in the choice of documents, forbade us to make use of *revelations*, as has often been done in similar circumstances. Without in the least detracting from the esteem in which the works of Saint Bridget, the Venerable Mother Mary d'Agréda, and Catherine Emmerich are held, we could not recognize them as historical documents. A few words will explain our reason: it would be necessary, first of all, to make them agree. They abound in contradictions respecting the same fact, and although such contradictions may not injure the edifying effect of such works, they absolutely prohibit any use being made of them as evidence.[1]

The question of supernatural inspiration, if we consider the word, has nothing to do with our present subject. The Holy Ghost, in giving to certain souls the fullest insight into the Passion and Death of the Redeemer, was not obliged to present these facts with scrupulous exactitude of detail.

Hence it is that Saint Bridget sees the Crucifixion with the eyes of the Byzantine artists, and Marie d'Agréda with those of the Spanish artists.[2] It does

[1] See the excellent remarks of M. l'Abbé Chevallier on this subject (*Récits évangéliques ;* Introduction, p. 62, etc.).

[2] The *Liber revelationum* seems to have been written in presence of the miniatures of Florence or of the Vatican and of the frescos of Bologna or Rome, — Byzantine works of the fourth to the twelfth century. The *Cité Mystique*, on the contrary, breathes of Ribera and of Zurbaran; the *Douloureuse Passion*, of Martin Schoen and of Albert Dürer.

not follow from this that their souls were not marvellously penetrated with love and compassion, as they would be if they had found themselves, with Magdalen, at the foot of the Cross. Inspiration might even create in them a painful surprise and confusion, by showing them the actors in the Drama of Calvary under a different aspect to that given them by local or contemporary Art. From infancy they had seen the Saviour, Mary, Saint John, Pilate, the soldiers, and the executioners, represented in a manner which it would be difficult and unnecessary to alter. Where would be the use of Catherine Emmerich, for instance, seeing Malchus under any form than that of one of Albert Dürer's [1] weather-beaten soldiers, striking the Divine Master on the cheek with his iron gauntlet. Is the Scourging less heart-rending because it was seen, in spirit, quite differently to what was consistent with Jewish or Roman manners?

God certainly did not intend to imprint the remembrance of the Passion on the minds of these pious women with features borrowed from the Trajan Column or Phœnician bas-reliefs. We must not expect from *revelations* what they cannot give, nor must we act like certain people, in whose opinion History and nature could not be right if they were not in accordance with their interpretation of these writings. The holy visionaries would have given themselves the most direct lie, if they had proved themselves as exacting as their readers. They have done nothing of the kind, and they seemed to have divined the judgment which Benedict XIV. would pass on visions and the manner of interpreting them.[2]

However, we would not deprive ourselves of a precious resource, by passing over the explanations

[1] *Douloureuse Passion*, c. viii.

[2] Benedict XIV., *De Canonizatione Sanctorum*.

given by Marie d'Agréda and Catherine Emmerich.[1] In more than one instance, they give proof of a delicate and powerful intuition which throws a light on the Gospel narrative and gives it life.

They have, moreover, a charm, at once human and divine, which cannot be done without in the recital of the Passion. The genius of Bossuet and the faith of Saint Bridget are admirably combined therein to render meditation on the sorrows and humiliation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, profitable to our souls.

VII

While saying that we offer to the reader a narrative authenticated by incontestable evidence, we cannot, at the same time, lay claim to absolute certainty, where we have no longer the actual text of the Gospel to support our statement; also, we justly make reservations for this text where it leaves room for discussion. As Ludolph the Carthusian well observes, there are certain points which could be only elucidated by a revelation,[2] not such as we spoke of just now, but similar to that whence the Gospel has its origin. Meanwhile, it does not follow that we are unable to regard our narrative as exact, when it is in accordance with the data of tradition and history. No one can, with any authority, oppose to it any other version of the facts. We think we are justified in saying to the reader, "Things must have

[1] There are many other *revelations* from which useful extracts may be made. We have only made use of the most known of our contemporaries. Marie d'Agréda and Catherine Emmerich are greatly esteemed at the present time. They resemble each other to such an extent that one seems a reproduction of the other.

[2] *Vita Jesu Christi*, p. 2, c. lxii, 9, "Certo sciri non potest nisi per revelationem."

happened in this manner." This is all we desire, and we believe we have attained our end.

At the present time, restorations or reconstructions of the past are very numerous.

History is no longer content with rapid sketches or general statements in which the characteristics of people and of places run the risk of being altered even to absurdity. It proceeds with increasing care of the details, so as to attain perfect exactitude — what we may call local coloring — in the description of manners and character, as well as for places and regulations. It often fully succeeds in this, giving us the sensation of living, as it were, in the past. We have tried to follow this plan, and to realize this ideal, without any illusion, however, as to the faults of the method and its imperfect results. But since the world is indulgent towards those who restore for us sacred or profane antiquity, it ought to be so to us also, when we try to give it an exact representation of Calvary. We expect this with the greater confidence that at times it applauds attempts essayed with more good-will than actual competency. If we have done no better, at least we have undertaken it with the chance of succeeding as well.

The writers of former days used to say ingenuously, in the prefaces addressed to "my friend the reader," what they thought of their work, expatiating at will on the labor of the preparation, so as the better to insure the esteem and sympathy of the public. Prefaces are read carelessly, and very likely it would be loss of time to imitate these old writers. But it cannot displease the reader to know that this book is the fruit of prolonged study, which was begun in France and continued in the East.[1] This study was

[1] Chiefly during the years 1885 and 1890.

utilized at first for preaching,[1] and finally for the present work, which has been revised several times from the first to the last chapter. If, according to the saying of the Italians, it has been written *con amore*, it has been written equally *cum labore*. Work, however, which we must admit was never painful; for Saint Augustine justly remarks, "*Ubi amatur non laboratur, aut si laboratur, labor amatur.*"

The reader will quickly perceive that the author, above all, is careful to make no assertion without supporting it by authority worthy of consideration, no matter whence its source. "We take the good wherever found," and the works of Protestants or of Rationalists are sometimes more valuable than Catholic books on the same questions. Why then prefer the latter to the former? Antiquity has formulated the rule of conduct to be observed in similar cases, "*Fac est ab hoste doceri.*" The contempt which some believers profess for all that does not come from their own side, cannot serve the cause of truth. If the infidel is right, why not admit it, and profit by the light which God has placed in his hands?

VIII

We must freely admit that the English school of writers has rendered us the greatest service. Without depreciating the Germans, we cannot give them the same praise. As for the information obtained from the recent works of French writers, it has been considerable, and we regard ourselves as the more bound to acknowledge it, that people seem less dis-

[1] In Paris, during the Lenten sermons of 1887, preached in the Church of Saint Roch.

posed to do justice to the men of talent and learning who represent this school. It is a strange thing that it is not only by their opponents they are ignored.[1] Catholics themselves, with that habitual diffidence with regard to all that comes from their own side, do not seem to esteem them much. Yet men like Vigouroux, Fillion, Chevallier, Fouard, Le Camus, and so many others, are well worthy of being read and quoted with the best. That they are our friends is not a reason for refusing them the testimony with which we honor our enemies, when they are deserving. This prudery equally scandalizes those whose laughter it provokes at our expense, and those who should, thanks to our efforts, laugh at the expense of Error.

IX

Pious souls will probably consider that their portion of this work has been too much reduced. To speak truly, its aim is not to furnish their meditations with the themes usually found in writings relating to the Passion of the Divine Master, with aspirations and resolutions which assist their mind and their will. It is, above all things, historical, and is confined to simple narration, leaving it to the reader to draw fruit from the narrative by his own personal efforts, according to the action of grace. Besides, the facts have in themselves a power of emotion and edification quite sufficient in our opinion. They speak a

[1] Nothing is so instructive as to read the bibliographical lists heading certain Protestant pamphlets on Jesus Christ. Salvador, Strauss, Renan, Flaubert, etc., are mentioned, but all that the Catholics have produced for the last thirty years is ignored or despised. For instance, see STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 26, and following.

language too persuasive to leave us anything to say. Quite the contrary. The sight of the Crucifix, such as we have tried to represent it, seems to us to supply for many orations; which in its presence would be useless, if not, indeed, calculated to distract and confuse.

There is a picture in the Church of the Capuchins, in the Place Barberini in Rome, representing *Christ on the Cross*, to which the following legend is attached.

A young man of dissolute character, finding himself near death, was about to sell his soul to the devil in exchange for a remnant of life and of pleasure. In the course of the negotiations with the Spirit of Evil, he had a strange inspiration.

"You were on Calvary," he said to the devil, "and you saw Jesus Christ die?"

"Yes," replied Satan.

"You could then paint a perfect representation of that scene?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Well, before I conclude the bargain you must paint that picture for me. This is a whim which I wish to have gratified."

Satan at first refused, but at last consented. The following day he sent the young man a small panel on which was painted a *Crucifixion*. The sight of it so wounded the misguided soul that he was overwhelmed with sorrow and repentance, like Peter when converted by the Master's glance.

I have seen that picture and — to my shame, I must confess it — the only impression it made on me was that of a wretched work.

But God makes use of the humblest means to produce the most marvellous effects. Shall my book

share the happy fate of the *Christ on the Cross* in the Barberini, as it shares its mediocrity? I hope so, with this condition, that the reader, before beginning or resuming the perusal thereof, will say a prayer in which his charity will appeal to the Divine Mercy for the deeply grateful author

FR. MARIE-JOSEPH OLLIVIER
of the Friars-Preachers.

THE PASSION

FIRST BOOK

JERUSALEM

CHAPTER I

JERUSALEM IN THE YEAR 34 OF JESUS CHRIST[1]

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not?" — MATTHEW xxiii. 37.

IT would be almost impossible to follow the narrative of the Passion properly, if we had not, beforehand, an exact idea of the time and the places in which it was accomplished. Jerusalem alone furnishes the setting to this drama, the scene of which could not be placed elsewhere, according to the mournful words of the Master: "Because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."[2] Even if she had not been predestined, according to the ancient oracles,[3] to serve as a stumbling-block to the Mission of Christ, she would still have become such by her place in the world, her special vocation in

[1] We follow the common tradition, against which nothing conclusive has yet been urged. As to the chronology, we accept that of Fouard, who fixes the birth of Jesus Christ in the year 749 of Rome, not quite four years before the common era.

[2] LUKE xiii. 33.

[3] ISAI. viii. 14; DANIEL ix. 24–26; ZACHAR. xii. 10; JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* VI. viii. 21.

the eyes of the Israelites, the character of her inhabitants, the creeds, the prejudices, the interests and the passions which bound, not only the inhabitants of Palestine, but even the Jews of the dispersion, and the proselytes of the whole world, to her Walls and to her Temple. The Manifestation of the Messiah could not take place elsewhere, and consequently it is there that the Sacrifice must be consummated, to which men were to attribute their salvation.

All that precedes the immolation of the Divine Victim may have another scene, — Bethlehem, Nazareth, Capernaum, and Bethany, — but at the moment in which the fulness of time has been attained, it is to Jerusalem that Jesus must ascend whilst He recounts to the friends of His last hour the agony, the humiliation, and the sufferings with which it is to be filled.[1] This is the reason why, two days before the treason of Judas, we are following in His footsteps, and as we climb the slope of the Mount of Olives, we cast a tear-dimmed glance[2] at the guilty city. Why are we not permitted to cry to her, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord, thy God"? But the time has not come when *the Lord shall build up the walls*[3] which are about to crumble until *one stone shall not rest upon another:*[4] mournful ruins, *inhabited by foxes*,[5] and lost in the shades of unutterable desolation.[6]

[1] LUKE xviii. 31. "Behold we go up to Jerusalem and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man."

[2] LUKE xix. 41. "And when he drew near, seeing the city, he wept over it."

[3] PSALM l. 20. "Deal favorably, O Lord — that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up."

[4] MATTHEW xxiv. 2. "There shall not be left here a stone upon a stone."

[5] LAMENT. v. 18. "Vulpes ambulaverunt in ea" ("foxes have walked upon it").

[6] DANIEL ix. 26.

At the beginning of the year 34 of Jesus Christ, Jerusalem had not the same boundary, nor did it present the same aspect as meets the eye to-day. The city extended more to the east and to the south, over the hills of Sion and of Ophel, which are now outside the walls, and it did not yet include the part of Bezetha at present enclosed by King Agrippa's Wall.[1] The area was nearly the same, but the circumference was quite different.

In order to understand this, it is best to place ourselves before the Eastern Wall of the Temple, which still remains as it was at the period of which we are speaking, and consequently affords a starting-point which cannot be disputed. On the north, the city boundary was marked by the wall of the outer Temple,[2] protected by the Sheep pool and the Pool of Strouthion, which served as moats. Running from east to west, its course was interrupted by the Tower of Antonia, projecting from the side of Bezetha, the slope of which was already covered with villas and palaces, but was without any works of fortification.

The Tower with its forum formed a parallelogram connected with the wall of the Asmoneans, or "second wall," which protected the quarter of Acra comprised between Moriah (the hill of the Temple) on the east, and Sion (the city of Jebus) on the southeast. At the level of the present gate of Damascus, this wall turned and followed the direction of the street which runs from this gate to that of David, from north to south as far as the base of the eminence on which rose Sion. It then continued at a right angle towards

[1] Or, more correctly, by the walls raised on the remains of Agrippa's enclosure.

[2] They designate by the name of Temple or Exterior Hieron, the porticos which surrounded the first court, called the Porch of the Gentiles; or again, the group of galleries and courts which preceded the Porch of the Priests. We use the word here in the first sense.

the west, and joined the gigantic mass of buildings known as the Citadel, or Castle of David, an impregnable fortress, at the foot of which Herod the Great had built his permanent dwelling.

A glance at the map of modern Jerusalem suffices to show that Calvary was thus situated outside the fortifications, a little farther on than the Gate of Judgment,[1] to the west of the city, and nearly in the centre of the angle produced by the development of the second wall. This portion of ground was at that time covered with gardens, and did not seem destined to be brought so soon within the walls, since tombs were being excavated there, as we know from the Gospel.[2] The ground here rose by degrees in a gentle slope towards a tolerably large space, where the Assyrians had formerly pitched their camp, and where Titus was to pitch his later. The Pool of Ezechias,[3] destined to become celebrated during the siege of the year 70, served as a link, so to say, between Golgotha and the Castle of David. The direction of the present streets indicates plainly enough that of the roads which must have led at that time from the Gate of Judgment to the Valley of Gihon, and to the great Pool of the Serpents,[4] on the road to Jaffa.

From the Castle of David, the wall led towards

[1] Or Gate of Ephraim, according to M. de Vogué (see the plan of Jerusalem which he has attached to his *Étude sur le Temple*), Stapfer (*Palestine in the time of Jesus Christ*, p. 57) recognizes it as the Gate Djennath, or of Gardens, so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, but this opinion does not appear very tenable.

[2] MATTHEW xxviii. 60. MARK xv. 46. LUKE xxiii. 53.

[3] Or Pool Amygdalon, on account of the almond-trees which surrounded it. JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.*, V. vi. 4; SAULCY, *Derniers Jours de Jérusalem*, p. 224.

[4] Birket-Mamillah of the Arabs. It is the Upper Pool of Isaias vii. 3, and probably the Pool of the Dragon of Nehemias (ESDRAS, ii. 13).

the south, completely encircling the summit of Mount Sion, and redescended the slopes which command the Valley of Jophet or Gehenna. At the point where this valley meets that of Jehosaphat, the wall crossed the gorge of Tyropœon, and reascended by the slopes of Ophel towards the Temple, to which it was attached below the Mosque El-Acksa, that is to say, behind the southeastern angle of the Outer Temple. At this point were the two gates so well-known as the Double and Triple Gates,[1] through which Our Saviour must have often passed when He was leaving the Porch in order to reach the country.

The walls of ancient Jerusalem included neither the Mussulman nor the Christian quarter of the present city. As it increased, the city of David and of Herod observed the law by which populations, straitened within their primitive walls, are impelled towards the west. Besides, it could not extend in any other direction, obstructed as it was, by the valleys of the east and of the south. At the time of which we are speaking, there was as yet no question of this increase, which began ten years later under the first Agrippa, and only ceased on the eve of the investiture by Titus.[2]

Thus defined, the walls seemed to include three or four distinct cities. In fact, David, Solomon, and Ozias had completely surrounded Sion with walls. Acra was equally enclosed on all sides. On the space comprised between Moriah and Acra, Manasses built a bastioned wall which continued the defences of Sion, and was supported by the Temple, as we have already said. Finally, a fourth wall,

[1] Named by the Rabbis, Gates of Hulda, in remembrance of the Prophetess. (IV KINGS xxii. 14.)

[2] For the preceding, consult PIEROTTI, "*Topographie ancienne et moderne de Jérusalem;*" DR. JOUON, *L'Authenticité du saint Sépulcre*, etc.

raised by Ezechias, encircled Amygdalon between the Castle of David and the Gate of Judgment, which was opened in the west front of Acra. This last enclosure, it is true, seems to have been but a memory at the time of the works undertaken by the Asmoneans, so that we are only verifying four quarters; that of the Temple, — of the Upper City, or ancient Jebus, on the summit of Sion, that of Xystus, the lower part of the same hill, with the Tyropœon joined to Ophel, and that of the Lower City, or Acra. Owing to the singularly rocky nature of the ground, this group presented the most picturesque appearance. A bridge thrown across the Valley of Tyropœon[1] afforded access to the Xystus from the Temple, while immense flights of steps, descending the declivity of Mello, led from Sion to the Lower City. The high walls built on the crests of the hills were dominated by colossal towers, sixty for the first enclosure (that of the Kings), fourteen for the second (that of the Asmoneans), without reckoning the Citadel and the Tower of Antonia.

Protected on the east and the south by deep valleys, and on the north by the Temple, — a veritable fortress, — Jerusalem was accessible only from the western front, which was the side invariably carried by the aggressors, — Nabuchodonosor, Titus, Chosroes, and Godfrey of Bouillon. But even on that side, Jerusalem was a very strong place, and, moreover, in the event of a first disaster, had always an almost impregnable refuge in the Citadel and Upper City. Unfortunately, being of such small extent,[2] the city was easily in-

[1] Stapfer (*La Palestine*, p. 59) seems to be in error when he places the Xystus at the bottom of the Tyropœon so that it would be below the bridge leading from the Temple to the Upper City.

[2] According to Josephus the perimeter of Jerusalem after Agrippa had enlarged it was about 33 stadii, but the wall of Bezetha, 1,800 yards, was included in this calculation. The population seems to have been 100,000 (see JOSEPHUS, *Contre Appion*, 1–22).

vested, hence peace was the blessing which she should have most desired, as her prophetic name, the City of Peace,[1] indicated. Strictly speaking, Jerusalem was never a commercial or industrial city,[2] even in the palmiest days of Solomon's reign, when the artists and the traffickers of the Asiatic world were thronging round the legendary monarch. Herod did not change his capital in this respect, although, in order to complete the great constructions which occupied half his life, he had drawn thither a whole nation of artisans and of builders.[3] The commercial and industrial spirit of the Jews was but little apparent, even in the very heart of Israel, inveterate as the habits of pomp and luxury may have been; nor was it a city of pleasure, at least not since the Babylonian captivity, — a terrible lesson which had cut short the idolatrous orgies of Baal and of Astarte. The sacred groves and the high places were but memories, like the braziers of Moloch and the pyramids of As-chour.

The offensive revival of Greek paganism under Antiochus Epiphanes had not restored much vitality to the joys of the past, and it was not long until the sword of the Maccabees undertook the purification of the Temple. Under the rule of the Asmoneans Jerusalem assumed the appearance of those Oriental cities with which every one is acquainted, — the capitals of princes of whom it is difficult to judge; who are sometimes intelligent, often oppressors, and always capricious; who leave the harem to reveal themselves in the transitory splendor of victory or the bloody freaks of what they call their justice.

[1] Hierous-chalaim, *Pacis visio*, or *Gaudii possessio*.

[2] GUÉRIN, *Jérusalem*. STAPFER, *La Palestine*, etc.

[3] Josephus fixes the number of workmen who were thrown idle after the works of the Temple had ceased at 18,000 (*Antiq. Jud.* XX. ix. 7).

Herod had darkened the picture still more, although involuntarily, it is true; for he had undertaken to transform the old city into a metropolis, — at once Oriental and Greek, the centre of every elegance and every enticement. Not satisfied with being lodged in a palace which might have ranked as an eighth wonder of the world, he had constructed for the people an amphitheatre, a circus, and a theatre, in which were held plays, races, and games worthy of Athens and of Rome.[1] He appeared at these shows in the midst of his family, and of his court, surrounded with dazzling pomp, and followed by the crowd of strangers, — Greeks, Latins, Egyptians, Germans, and Gauls, — who were attached to his fortunes or attracted by his fame.

But the Jewish people held aloof, and discreetly invoked maledictions, for it was not prudent to condemn aloud these profanations of the city of Jehovah. The tyrant's police were numerous and zealous; a word might cost one his head.[2] We can easily understand that Jerusalem was none the gayer for them, and Herod's bloody exploits caused more animation in the city than the sports of his mummers or the labors of his workmen.

In order to force the admiration of his people, if not their esteem and sympathy, he had, above all, dreamed of restoring the Temple, which was threatened with ruin, and had, indeed, become unworthy of its destiny.[3] He caused this dream to become a reality which surpassed all expectation, and almost entirely disarmed hatred, at least for some days. He enlarged the platform of Moriah by means of gigantic

[1] Joseph., *Antiq. Jud.* XX. viii. 1.

[2] Ledrain, *Hist. d'Israël*, ii. 331; Saulcy, *Hist. d'Hérode*, p. 183.

[3] Perrot and Chipiez, *Hist. de l'Art*, iv. 205; Joseph., *Antiq. Jud.* XX. xi.

works, enclosed it in a suite of porticos with marble pillars and ceilings of cedar; it was paved with mosaic and connected by gates, which even to this day are marvels.

In the centre rose the Temple or Outer Court, that is to say, the Sanctuary, which was preceded by three courts, — that of the women (Azareth-Naschim), of the Children of Israel (Azareth-Ischrâl), and that of the Levites or priests (Azareth-Cohanim). In the first of these courts was situated the Gazophylakion, or Treasury, of which mention is made in the Gospel of Saint Mark, with reference to the widow's mite.[1] The second was entered by that matchless gate of bronze which recalled the memory of Nicanor, and which certain authors recognize in the Acts under the name "Speciosa," pre-eminently the Beautiful.[2] In the Court of the Priests rose the Altar of Holocausts (whole burnt offerings), preceding the Holy Place (Hecal), in the centre of which was the Holy of Holies (Debir), which was closed by a silken veil, embroidered in the most brilliant colors.

The whole edifice was of white marble, the interior being cased with cedar and ornamented with gold. The roof of the Sanctuary was adorned with glittering spires which gave it a starry radiance, so that, seen from afar, the Temple resembled a snowy mountain,[3] which the rays of the rising sun tinted in purple and gold.

The dedication was performed by Herod himself in the month of June, in the eighteenth year of his reign, and the splendor thereof equalled, if it did not

[1] MARK xii. 41.

[2] ACTS APOSTLES iii. 2. According to others, who seem to us to be right, the name of Speciosa, ὡραῖα, belongs to the Eastern gate, really the Golden Gate.

[3] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* V. xiv. 13.

surpass, that of which the second book of the *Paralipomenon* has preserved for us the remembrance.[1]

Thus, it is easy for us to understand, that the effect of the restoration of the Temple was a recrudescence of veneration for the Holy City, which became more and more the goal of numerous pilgrimages, particularly at the time of great festivals, and more especially at the Paschal time. If authentic documents had not attested for us the earnestness of the Jews of the dispersion at that time of year, we should have difficulty in believing what we are told about it. Nearly two millions of men, and sometimes more, such was the number officially verified on several occasions by the local authorities at the request of the Roman Governors.[2] This multitude spoke all languages, followed the most diverse customs, and observed the most incongruous rites, but yet without losing anything of the traditional love amongst men for the city of God,[3] destined to become the capital of the Universal Kingdom of which the Messiah was to be the founder. The real characteristics of Jerusalem were those of the holy cities of the East, both in ancient and modern times, — Delphi, Ephesus, Benares, Lhassa, Mecca, etc. It was a centre of reunion for believers, a focus of religious life, with something of mysticism and solemnity in its manners and ways, — a proud puritanism ever ready to degenerate into fanaticism. The Jew who dwelt in the environs of Sion, for that reason alone regarded with contempt the Galilean, as being the neighbor of the Gentiles, and he despised still more his compatriot who was obliged to live amongst strangers.[4] He abominated

[1] *Paralipomenon*, vii. 5, 10; JOSEPH., *Antiq.* xv., xii.

[2] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* V. ix. 3; TALMUD (*Echa Rabbath*, p. 62).

[3] PSALM lxxxvi. 3. "Glorious things are said of thee, O City of God!"

[4] RENAN, *Vie de Jésus*, p. 208.

the heterodox Samaritan, and treated the Alexandrian as a schismatic,[1] while the proselyte only found favor with him by dint of his humility and his generosity towards the Sanctuary. The inhabitant of the Holy City carried his pride and scorn still further. He belonged to a superior caste which was illuminated by the purest rays of Truth and was watered by the living waters of Doctrine,—which was an integral part of the Doctrine itself and the accredited guardian of Truth.

In reality, was it not for him that the Doctors of the Law resumed each day under the porticos of the Temple the mystic teachings and the subtle discussions of which the pilgrim tasted as he passed, just as the soldier of Gideon drank from the hollow of his hand the waters of the rushing torrent.[2]

Was he not the assiduous, attentive, enthusiastic disciple of the *Rabbis* who had come from the four quarters of the earth to pour their knowledge into the treasury whose accumulated riches were for him alone?

Was it not he who consecrated, if he did not inspire, their genius, and was not his approbation the highest reward of their eloquence and of their virtue?

He strutted behind the blameless Pharisees and the learned Scribes, like the soldiers of the Imperator on a day of triumph, but his day of triumph began again for him with each succeeding dawn, and even seemed to know no wane.

His pride suffered much from the already prolonged humiliation to which he was condemned by the Roman occupation, still, even in that, he found compensations. Cæsar had sacrifice offered in his own name twice daily, and everywhere within the

[1] STAPFER, *La Palestine au temps de Jésus*, preface, p. 3.
[2] JUDGES vii. 6. "Casting it with the hand to their mouth."

sacred walls were displayed the proofs of his munificence to the Temple, and his veneration for the God of Israel.[1] The procurators were as careful to enforce respect for the religious ordinances of Moses as for the Emperor's decrees.

Besides, the Roman yoke was light, and people persuaded themselves that it was transitory. Nothing essential had been changed in the traditional habits of the people, who governed themselves by their own Laws.[2] They paid tribute, it is true, but that did not prevent them from having their special treasury in the Sanctuary, which Tiberius wished to be respected as an inviolable asylum.

Their tribunals no longer possessed the right of capital punishment (*jus gladii*), but they had confidence that the procurators would ratify, in case of need, the sentences of the Sanhedrim.

The Asmoneans had followed in the footsteps of Solomon's heirs, and Herod's sons possessed neither the Imperial favor nor the popular sympathy.

But the day of the Messiah was approaching; David was about to flourish again, and the Kingdom of Juda to recall the vanished splendor.

Thus, when the Jew beheld the soldier on guard at the Northern portico of the Porch, there was as much of pity as of anger in his glance; "that son of a dog"[3] would not always defile the Holy Land, and it would be joy without compare to drive him far beyond the frontiers, which he should never again cross.

The expectation of the Messiah was the soul of

[1] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* V. xiii. 6; SEUTON., *August.*, 93; PHILO, *Legat. ad Caium.*

[2] They had what the ancients called "Liberty with their own laws."

[3] A familiar expression among the Jews. II KINGS xvi. 9. "Why should this dead dog?" APOC. xxii. 15. "Without are dogs." The Mussulmans apply the word to all infidels, whether Christians, Jews, or Pagans.

Jewish life. In proportion as the time drew near, the preoccupation grew more intense and more anxious. Calculations of all kinds were made in an effort to fix precisely the hour of Christ's manifestation and the inauguration of his Kingdom.[1] At the time of which we are writing, all Israel was on the alert. Anne and Simeon have told us so on the day of Mary's Purification;[2] John the Baptist receives the assurance of it from the lips of the Sanhedrists, who ask him if he is the Christ;[3] the Samaritan woman attests it, to Jesus at Jacob's Well.[4] How then is it that the only effect of the answer to the Pharisees: "It is I who am the Messiah, the Son of God and the Redeemer of Israel," was to irritate the Jews and drive them to Deicide?

The error must be attributed to the characteristics of that generation; to the teaching which prevailed; to the decay of religious life among the faithful of the dispersion, and to the passions of those who ruled Israel.

The Jews, imbued by tradition with very inexact ideas regarding the Mission of the Messiah, beheld him in their dreams as a deliverer, like the ancient Judges or the Maccabees, but whose appearance would be more splendid, his conquests more extended, and his reign of longer duration.

It was a perfectly human monarch whom they expected, in the hope of sharing in the temporal goods which he would not fail to lavish on his faithful ones, beginning with the Children of Abraham.[5]

[1] CHAMPAGNY, *Rome et la Judée*, i. 32–40.

[2] LUKE ii. 25, 38. [3] JOHN i. 19, 27; LUKE iii. 15.

[4] JOHN iv. 25. "I know that the Messias cometh who is called Christ."

[5] See on this subject, M. Abbé FRÉMONT, *Jésus-Christ attendu et prophetisé*, vol. ii. of the year 1888. CHAMPAGNY, *Rome et la Judée*, i. 34. The curious note which S. Cahen puts to page 231 of the

Jesus bore but little resemblance to the conventional type of the Messiah. Moreover He struck at the root of the Rabbinical teaching, the hatefulness and absurdity of which He exposed to all who would listen, openly avowing His intention of replacing it by a doctrine and practices which should destroy it utterly.[1] The more respect He showed to the Law itself, which He said, He came not to destroy but to fulfil,[2] the less he paid to the famous tradition of the ancients,[3] which the Scribes and the Pharisees claimed. Therefore, inevitably, the majority would be against Him; the doctors and that sceptical, unbelieving priesthood which tolerated, if it did not favor, a state of things so little conducive to the acceptation of the real Messiah. He had succeeded in Galilee, in Perea, and in Samaria, in gathering around Him some disciples, but they were few, and but little to be relied upon.

In Jerusalem, He always encountered hostility and defiance. No doubt, there, as elsewhere, at times, He aroused powerful emotions, and sometimes evoked enthusiastic plaudits, but it was only an affair of the moment. Further, His influence was rather over outsiders, the passing visitors to the Temple, who quickly forgot the words they had heard in Solomon's Porch or in the Porch of the Temple.

The Gospel proves this very clearly, when it records the questions which were put in the crowd, concerning the Divine Master: "Who is this?"

second volume of his *Bible* (Isai. — *ad calcem*) shows us plainly how the scribes could dispute and deny the character of the Messiah in Christ.

[1] Abbé LEMANN, "*Valeur de l'assemblée*," etc., p. 28, 29.

[2] MATTHEW v. 17. "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfil."

[3] MARK vii. 5. "Why do not thy disciples walk according to the tradition of the ancients?"

they ask, when He makes His triumphal entry on Palm Sunday. The answer is precisely the explanation which would be given by the better informed to those who did not know Him. "It is the Prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."[1]

Already the remembrance of other festivals on which He had preached and worked miracles had faded, if it were not effaced, from the minds of those who had admired Him, or who had heard His wisdom and His power extolled. His friends,[2] the Galileans, communicated their ardor to those whom they met; the crowd, as is usual on such occasions, collected on hearing of the prodigies and at the noise of the acclamations, which it re-echoed with all its might. They escorted Jesus Christ in triumph from Bethphage to the city, their numbers, as they went, being increased by the obscure inhabitants of Ophel. With loud hosannahs they entered the Temple, and then, evening having come, they dispersed without any serious impression having been made upon their minds, and relapsed into their habitual state of indifference.[3] Such was the normal condition of the greater number amongst them. A few excepted, the Israelites of the dispersion lived in a state of laxity of belief and practice, little calculated to bring them into unity with the Jews of Jerusalem, in an ardent hope of the Messiah. Without doubt they accepted the prophecies, and expected their fulfilment; they even believed that fulfilment to be near at hand, but they did not carry the yoke which weighed upon their

[1] MATTHEW xxi. 10. "Who is this?— Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

[2] LUKE xix. 37. "The whole multitude of his disciples."

[3] Read attentively the verses 1 to 11 of the xxi. chapter of St. Matthew; the verses 1–11 of St. Mark xi.; the 28–48 of the xix. of St. Luke; the 11–50 of the xii. of St. John; especially 34, and following.

brethren at Jerusalem, or at least it did not press so heavily upon them, and consequently they were less eager to find a deliverer.

To them also Moses was a far-off lawgiver, whose teachings had become more and more obscured; although at the same time the Rabbinical doctrines never found much favor with them.[1] In the presence of an excitement like that of Bethany, and with Lazarus before their eyes, it was not difficult for them to kindle for a moment into enthusiasm, and so deceive the Pharisees as to the extent of the manifestation, "Behold, every one runs after him."[2] But that same evening it was easy to prove that this crowd had lost much of its enthusiasm, and was beginning again to hesitate[3] in presence of a Messiah who had not overturned the Tower of Antonia, and dispersed His enemies with the breath of His nostrils, according to the words of the prophet.[4] However, Jesus did not permit Himself to be deceived by them. He had said plainly in the desert, that they were attracted much more by the multiplication of the loaves, that miracle employed in the service of their material needs, than by the preaching of the Good Tidings,[5] and, as Saint John remarks,[6] "because he knew all men" the Divine Master had no confidence in this eagerness to hail Him King of Israel.

It would not require much effort on the part of the priests and doctors to lead this multitude according to the inclination of their own passions. What they

[1] CHAMPAGNY, *Rome et la Judée*, vol. i. p. 110.

[2] JOHN xii. 19. "Behold, the whole world has gone after him."

[3] Id. xii. 34, and following.

[4] PSALM lxvii. 2. "Let them that hate him flee from before his face."

[5] JOHN vi. 26. "You seek me . . . because you did eat of the loaves and were filled."

[6] Id. ii. 23–25. "Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for he knew all men."

dreaded when they were disputing as to the time when Jesus should be arrested and put to death, was the Roman intervention in the event of public disturbance, which they feared far more than the disturbance itself. They were sure of Jerusalem and its environs. In that quarter there was every probability that they would be able to sway the minds of the pilgrims who would necessarily form an opinion according to the ideas prevalent in the metropolis. With regard to the Galileans, there was nothing to be feared from their opposition, in view of the assured majority of their opponents. Disarmed and disowned, as they would be beforehand, they must feel themselves lost in the crowd; they were liable to great penalties if they were repulsed, as they knew from recent experience,[1] and even admitting the possibility of their momentary success, still they had nothing to hope from the future. Therefore the danger was not in that direction, but decidedly on the side of the Romans, who would not fail to interfere, and it was impossible to foresee which party they would uphold, once the affair was in their hands. If they could guard against this, the rest would be easy, provided they had time to prepare the public mind for the harsh measures they were projecting against the Nazarene; for which end they labored without the least regard for truth or justice.

Thus, at the beginning of the Nisan of the year 34 (or the first month of the year), Jesus Christ was surrounded by a network of calumnies, paving the way for the sentence of outlawry with which they wanted to strike Him, so as to complete His discredit, and render it impossible for His partisans to interfere, struck or threatened, as they would be, with the

[1] LUKE xiii. 1. "The Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices."

same blow. But they took good care not to let the Romans be conversant with their plans, feeling that the more unexpectedly these were produced, the surer they would be of success, as bearing the character of measures rendered necessary by circumstances, and at once lawful and justifiable; consequently it would be impossible to thwart them, even if it were desired.

We shall see that the priests and Pharisees were not mistaken in their calculations. Thus, Jerusalem was indeed a city predisposed to the murder of its Redeemer. One could feel wafted through the air that breath of fanaticism which is familiar to the Giaours who lose their way in the holy cities of the East on great festival days, when the multitude is more heated by the fanatic seers than by the rays of the ardent sun. From the top of the towers of the Antonia the sentinels were anxiously watching the restless movements of the priests and the people. The procurator, who had arrived the day before with a new cohort of the 12th legion, the cohort which was to bear in history the name "Fulminante,"[1] was asking himself where would the thunderbolt fall which was placed in his hands. But to all it was quite evident that the atmosphere was stormy, and that the lightning would not long delay to rend the cloud which was stretched like a sombre veil over the city which killed the prophets and stoned those who were sent to her.[2]

[1] At that time "*fulminata*," this was the surname of the *legio duodecima gemina*, which habitually sojourned at Cæsarea, and which furnished the garrison of Jerusalem. After the siege of 70 it was sent to Melitene, whence it took the name of *Melitine*, which it bore under Marcus Aurelius before being called *fulminante*.

[2] MATTHEW xxiii. 37. "Jerusalem, thou that killeth the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee."

CHAPTER II

JESUS CHRIST EXCOMMUNICATED BY THE SANHEDRIM

"The Jews had already agreed among themselves, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." JOHN ix. 22.

"Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?" Id. xi. 8.

THERE is, perhaps, no thought so repugnant when first presented to us, as that of Our Lord, outlawed, or excommunicated, in cold blood, with all the leisure of reflection, and with all the forms prescribed by law in regular proceedings. The greater number of us, undoubtedly, regard the death of Jesus as the result of a hatred which had long lurked in shadow and silence, which showed itself openly at the council held soon after the raising of Lazarus, and finally found full vent on the evening of Holy Thursday. But, at first sight, there seem to have been no official preliminaries to the sentence of the Sanhedrim which Pilate ratified. Seizing the opportunity which the treason of Judas afforded them, the Scribes and Pharisees took their Victim by surprise; stirred up the populace; forced the Procurator to give his consent, and in this way consummated the Deicide with a rapidity which mitigates its horror, since it lessens the responsibility of the guilty by making their crime seem more the result of passion than of premeditation. The judges acted on an impulse of passion which is explained by the last objurgations of Jesus; the people were carried away by a passing excite-

ment, as is usual with crowds when inflamed by their leaders; both had demanded, obtained, and shed blood before they realized the consequences of their crime. They deserve, it is true, the strongest reprobation, but one may plead extenuating circumstances for them, the extenuating circumstances of passion and of the blindness which it entails. In calmer moments they would not have invoked this Blood upon their heads; and Saint Paul was right when he said, "If they had known the King of Glory, they would never have crucified him."[1]

In reality, nothing is less in accordance with the facts. The Deicide was premeditated. The princes of the people had long ago arranged it; and the people themselves had long accepted the possibility (this applies to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the partisans of the Sanhedrim, as we shall have occasion to show later). Therefore, the responsibility for the blood which was shed falls fully and entirely on those who cried out, and caused others to cry out, "Crucify Him!"[2] We and our children shall answer for it.[3]

If the world, after eighteen centuries, still holds them as accursed, it is their own fault. They cursed, before the world, the Eternal King of Ages. Perhaps some one will object, with Saint Paul, that, "they have not known Him." This is true, but because they did not want to know Him, and the more suitable word would be that of Saint Peter, "They have disowned[4] and denied Him."[5]

[1] I Cor. ii. 8. "If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory."

[2] Mark xv. 13. "Crucify Him."

[3] Matthew xxvii. 25. "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

[4] Acts Apostles xiii. 27. "Not knowing him . . . they desired of Pilate that they might kill him."

[5] Id. iii. 13–14. "Jesus whom you indeed delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate."

Let us search for the reasons, and let us examine how it was that Israel was led to place her Redeemer among the number of the wicked,[1] by pronouncing against Him a sentence of excommunication, which was equal to sentence of death.

The Gospel suffices to furnish us with the elements of this study; the writings of the Rabbis are responsible for its completion.

We have said before that the Jewish people were expecting a Messiah, that is to say, a Liberator, who would free them from all oppression, would restore to them their autonomy, would even render them powerful among all peoples, if not actually rulers of the earth. They had borrowed these different characteristics of Christ from the prophecies of various dates, in which His history was, so to say, mapped out, from Abraham to Moses, from David to Isaiah, from Daniel to Malachi. These were no illusions or fanciful things, because the text was clear and easily understood, no matter to what period they belonged; but especially those of the last period, that of the Babylonian captivity and of the subsequent decadence, from the date of Zorobabel to the time of Herod and of Cæsar.

But, as must inevitably happen, the people saw in the coming of Christ and in His reign, the establishment of a new political and social régime which would procure for its clients earthly possessions, on condition that they observed the traditional law of Jehovah. Thus many of them had hailed Herod the Great as the Messiah of Israel. This led to the formation of a new sect to which the Gospel makes frequent allusion,[2] and which was still flourishing in Rome

[1] ISAI. liii. 12. "He was reputed with the wicked."
[2] MATTHEW xxii. 16; MARK iii. 6, etc.

long after the death of that prince.[1] The moral regeneration of humanity seemed to them a consequence of the temporal advantages which the new monarch would assure to his brethren, in the first instance, and later, to the proselytes who would rally round Him in His triumphal course through the world.

This obstinate error cannot be charged to them as a crime. All that the prophets had said of the Messiah might be so understood, if regard was had only to appearances; and of themselves, the people were never capable of judging differently. The consequence was that Jesus Christ did not realize their ideal. Nothing in His speech or His acts indicated the will to restore the Throne of the Asmoneans, and still less that of David, although He allowed His adherents to salute Him as Son of the Prophet King.[2] Further, when the crowd, after His miracles in the desert,[3] wanted to make Him King, He fled and thus cut short every attempt of the kind. He used to speak, it is true, of His Kingdom and of His reign,[4] but in peculiar terms wherein most often was to be found the panegyric of poverty, of submission, of suffering, and of sacrifice.[5] Nowhere was there question of earthly joys, of the glory conferred by dominion over men, or of the restoration of Solomon's splendor. A son of the people, the friend of the poor and the lowly, but little desirous of pleasing the great, indifferent to the Roman Government, paying tribute to Cæsar's collectors, as readily as to those of

[1] PERSIUS, *Satires*, v. 180, and following. — TERTULLIAN, *Contra Hæres.*; S. EPIPHAN., *Hæres.*, xix.

[2] MATTHEW xv. 22. "O Lord, thou son of David."

[3] JOHN vi. 15.

[4] MATTHEW xii. 28, etc. Compare the three other Gospels, *passim*.

[5] Id. v. 3, 10. "Blessed are the poor . . . Blessed are they that suffer persecution."

the Sanhedrim,[1] he had nothing seemingly of that King of Glory before whom the Eternal Gates should open to allow the procession of His strength and of His might in battle to pass.[2]

A native of half-pagan Galilee,[3] which had never produced a prophet;[4] an inhabitant of Nazareth whence nothing good could come,[5] he had but little to recommend him to the Jewish people, especially to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Judea was, we know, the land of orthodoxy, and Salvation was to come out of her.[6] Jerusalem, the holy city, conferred on its inhabitants the right to treat provincials, particularly the Galilæans, the same as rustics are treated at the present day, when it would be considered quite out of place to admit that they have the same intelligence or merit the same consideration as those accustomed to Parisian life. Was it possible for the Messiah to come out of Galilee?[7] As the prophets called Him the Son of David, and foretold His birth at Bethlehem in Judea, the answer was ready at hand. The son of the carpenter of Nazareth might indeed take up the rôle essayed formerly by his fellow-countryman, Judas the Galilæan,[8] but He had just as little chance of succeeding with the sages who enlightened Sion, or with the privileged people whom God permitted to live in the shadow of His Altar.

[1] MATTHEW xvii. 23, xxii. 17.

[2] PSALM xxiii. 7–10. "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, . . . and the King of Glory shall enter in. . . . The Lord who is strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle."

[3] ISAI. ix. 1; MATTHEW iv. 15. "Galilee of the Gentiles."

[4] JOHN vii. 52. "Out of Galilee a Prophet riseth not."

[5] Id. i. 46. "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?"

[6] JOHN iv. 22. "For Salvation is of the Jews."

[7] Id. vii. 41. "Doth the Christ come out of Galilee?"

[8] ACTS APOSTLES v. 37. "Judas of Galilee . . . and drew away the people after him, he also perished."

The doctors, it is true, could have reminded their disciples that the Messiah was to come from Galilee [1] to manifest Himself in Jerusalem — according to the Prophet Isaias.[2] With regard to the lineage of Our Lord, it could easily have been established by consulting their genealogical tables, and the census returns of Sulpicius Quirinius would have easily shown that the Son of Mary was born at Bethlehem-Ephrata, as became the Messiah.[3]

It even seems astonishing, that no one thought of this investigation, and that the remembrance of the events which were accomplished around the Cradle of Christ should have been so completely lost.

But it is very necessary to remark that the general belief was that Jesus of Nazareth,[4] as He was called, living from His earliest infancy in Galilee, had no other home. His family had no longer any possessions in Jerusalem or Bethlehem which might recall their sojourn in these places.[5] Besides the Race of David, fallen and forgotten, had multiplied, as happened later to the descendants of the Prophet, those men with green turbans, who are to be met with so frequently in the East; no one any longer paid any attention to them, even when it might have seemed natural to pay attention to them.[6] Herod had effaced

[1] ISAI. ix. 1. "At the first time the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali was lightly touched, and at last the way of the sea beyond the Jordan of the Galilee of the Gentiles was heavily loaded."

[2] Id. xl. 9–10. "Get thee upon a high mountain, thou that bringest good tidings to Sion: lift up thy voice with strength, thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem." Compare Id. xli. 9–10.

[3] PSALM cxxxi. 6. "Behold we have heard of it in Ephrata." MICH. v. 2. "And thou Bethlehem Ephrata . . . out of thee shall he come forth unto me who is to be the ruler in Israel."

[4] MATTHEW xxvi. 71; MARK x. 47; JOHN xix. 19. "Jesus of Nazareth."

[5] V. HEGESIPPUS (in EUSEBIUS, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 29), speaking of the grandson of Juda, *Brother* of the Saviour.

[6] JOSEPH., *Antiq.* XVIII. i. 1–2.

the remembrance of Solomon from the minds of the people; and the massacre of the Innocents had been preceded and followed by so many similar crimes that it was lost among the number. The census returns of Quirinius had highly displeased the Jews, and it would not have been politic to recall it to their minds, ill-disposed as they were to return to the subject.

Many, owing to a wrong interpretation of Isaias's words, believed that the Messiah would have neither father nor mother, nor ancestry,[1] a belief which lessened the interest of an inquiry into the origin of Jesus whose Mother was quite as well known in Jerusalem as on the borders of the Lake of Gennesareth.[2]

Even admitting that the doctors were willing to enlighten people's minds, it is to be questioned if they could have succeeded. The work of several centuries had substituted for the correct ideas and rational practices of the Mosaic Law a doctrine and customs in complete opposition to the spirit of that law, but the superstitious observance of which defied all reaction. An attentive perusal of the Gospel proves that the great complaint against Jesus arose from His contempt for this new religion of which the *Talmud*[3] says, "The words of the doctors surpass those of the Law and of the Prophets. He who occupies himself with the Scripture does something indifferent; he who meditates on the *Mischna* is worthy of reward, but he who devotes himself to the study of the *Gemara* performs the most meritorious action." To touch this mass of silly interpretations and slavish ordinances was to touch the sacred Ark itself. The doctors who had prepared this burden

[1] ISAI. liii. 8. "Who shall declare His generation."
[2] MATTHEW xiii. 55. "Is not His mother called Mary?"
[3] Treatise *Bava-Metzia*.

and who took good care not to carry it on their own shoulders,[1] because, as they tacitly agreed with Jesus, they found it insupportable,[2] were no longer powerful enough to despise it. They would have been cast out of the synagogue, perhaps stoned: novel martyrs for errors which they themselves had brought into repute and according to which they must henceforth regulate their public life. Therefore they preferred to profit by them, as the Divine Master[3] told them in the presence of all the people.

However, all were not unbelieving impostors. More than one amongst them could say that he was a conscientious follower of the doctrines of "Hillel and of Schammäi," if conviction can be confounded with fanaticism, as they confounded it themselves. The greater number, it is true, served their own interests, before everything. The more ardent among them fancied they were serving higher interests which at the same time were quite in accord with their own desires and prejudices.[4] It is easier than we think to falsify our judgment in this manner and to eagerly pursue the ideal we have set up for ourselves, feeling at liberty to destroy all the obstacles which may be in our path. Sincerity is not rare amongst the votaries and apostles of error. God alone has the right to condemn those who are the originators of it; and Saint Augustine was right when he said to the heretics of his time, "Those who do not know how difficult it is to find the truth may be severe with you, I who know

[1] MATTHEW xxiii. 4. "For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens; and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them."

[2] Id. xxiii. 4; compare id. xv. 14; LUKE xi. 52.

[3] MARK xii. 40. "Who devour the houses of widows under the pretence of long prayer."

[4] RENAN, *Vie de Jésus*, p. 327, and following. Abbé LEMANN, *Valeur de l'assemblée*, etc. p. 29–38.

from experience what it is, I, can have nothing but pity and charity for you."

But, to all alike, Jesus must have been hateful, because He overturned their chairs with as little ceremony as He did the seats of the merchants in the Temple; unmasking their hypocrisy or reducing their sophisms to naught; calling to the liberty of the children of God those whom they were enslaving under the yoke of man, or rather of the devil, "their father,"[1] as He told them without any regard for their pride. This at once decided them. The Rabbi of Nazareth could not be the Messiah, not even a prophet, not even a man of God; He was a sinner,[2] a Samaritan,[3] one possessed,[4] a seducer,[5] who compromised the public peace[6] and the welfare of the country.[7] It were best that He should disappear, that is to say, that He should be put to death,— a terrible conclusion which frightened neither the priests, nor the Scribes, nor the Pharisees, and which they undertook to impose upon the public conscience.

It was necessary to justify this indictment to the people, or, at the very least, to find for it some pretext. This was easily done by distorting some words of our Saviour, or by misinterpreting some of His actions: contempt of the Sabbath; the prediction of the destruction of the Temple; the decrease, if not actual rejection of Israel, in favor of the Gentiles; the tradition of the ancients mocked at in the name

[1] JOHN viii. 44. "You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father you will do."

[2] Id. ix. 24. "This man is a sinner."

[3] Id. viii. 48. "Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil."

[4] MARK iii. 22. "He hath Beelzebub."

[5] MATTHEW xxviii. 63. "That seducer said, while he was yet alive: after three days I will rise again."

[6] LUKE xxii. 2.

[7] JOHN xi. 48. "If we let him alone . . . the Romans will come and take away our place and nation."

of a new doctrine; above all, the usurpation of the title "Son of God." Such were the complaints to which they added the secondary ones of frequenting the company of publicans and sinners, indulgence with regard to adulterers, and the rehabilitation of courtesans, united to undisguised contempt for official holiness and display.[1]

But His miracles! What did they do with them? What is done with them in the present day when they contradict some opinion or impede some interest? They denied them in public,[2] being at liberty to acknowledge them in private;[3] and what has always been a clever thing to do, they explained them! The explanations of that time differed from those of the present day, for then, it was maintained that Beelzebub[4] was the author of the miracles. The result was the same for the deluded multitude and for the inventors of the explanation, who ended in believing in it themselves, with that strange conviction of which we have so many examples before us. The intellect cannot be depraved with impunity, and God's worst vengeance is madness, on which the dishonesty of pride borders.

Such were the dispositions of the people of Jerusalem, and of their leaders, at the close of the second year of our Saviour's public life. We are now able to fix the date of the first excommunication pronounced against Him, which took place a considerable time before the cure of the man born blind, as being 30th September (Tisri) of the year 37.[5]

[1] See the Gospels, *passim*.

[2] JOHN ix. 16. "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?"

[3] Id. xi. 47. "This man doth many miracles."

[4] LUKE xi. 15. "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of Devils." Compare MATTHEW xii. 24; MARK iii. 22.

[5] CHEVALLIER, *Récits évangéliques*, p. 315; SEPP, *Vie de Jésus-Christ*, vol. ii. 184.

We see, in fact, in the Gospel of St. John, to whom we owe the history of this prodigy,[1] that the Sanhedrim had pronounced exclusion from the synagogue against the adherents of Jesus, and that the subject of the miracle was expelled himself for having rendered testimony to his benefactor. But we could not understand the import of this measure, if we had not, at first, an exact idea of the meaning of excommunication amongst the Jews.[2] It consisted of three degrees, of which the two first were equivalent to what is called Minor Excommunication. The first degree (Niddui) was inflicted for slight offences punishable by fine, or if the culprit were insolvent, he was deprived of his bath and was forbidden to shave or to take his meals with his family. All who held necessary communication with him were obliged to keep at a distance of about three yards. He was not refused entrance to the Temple, but could not go round it at his will. The duration of the excommunication, Niddui, was usually thirty days, and it could be renewed several times, according to the decision of the Tribunal.

From the care which the Gospel takes to inform us that Jesus at this period stood in Solomon's Porch,[3] quite close to the Eastern Gate, and outside even the porch of the Gentiles, we infer that the intention is to show us Jesus separated from the other believers, in conformity with the meaning of the word "Niddui," which signifies separation. When the guilty person did not amend, or in the case of graver faults, the sentence of Cherem (abandonment) was pronounced against him. This sentence could only be pro-

[1] JOHN xi. 1–38.

[2] *Apparatus biblicus*, vol. iii. p. 531, and following; LIGHTFOOT, *Horæ talmudicæ*, vol. ii. 890; SEPP, *Vie de Jésus-Christ*, vol. iii. 220.

[3] JOHN x. 23. "And Jesus walked in the Temple, in Solomon's porch."

nounced by a tribunal composed of at least ten members.[1]

It was no longer a simple denunciation, but contained an actual malediction, borrowed, it is said, from the Canticle of Deborah in which the inhabitants of Meroz are cut off from Israel.[2] The effects were more formidable. The condemned could neither sell nor buy anything except the necessaries of life; he could not teach in public nor assist at the preaching in the synagogue.[3] However, he retained the right to gather round him, either secretly in his own house or in some retired place, his masters or ordinary disciples. Hence it was that our Saviour was permitted to assemble his disciples in Solomon's Porch, in the Cenacle, and on the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

Several commentators[4] have regarded this excommunication as the cause of his absence at the time of the Pasch in the year 32,[5] and of his journey to Phœnicia[6] which afforded him an opportunity of avoiding the outrages which the Jews had planned. This second excommunication is easily recognized in the silence affected by Jesus during the whole scene of the accusation against the woman taken in adultery. The divine Master, in fact, is satisfied with writing on the ground without saying a single word to the Scribes and Pharisees, as if to emphasize the

[1] OTHO, quoting the *Pirke Eleizer*, c. 38.

[2] JUDGES v. 23. "Curse ye the land of Meroz, — curse the inhabitants thereof."

See the formula quoted by LEMANN, p. 32, which was directed, it seems, against the adherents of Jesus.

[3] FARRAR (*Life of Christ*, xli. 274) notices the silence imposed on Jesus in the synagogue from before the cure of the man born blind.

[4] SEPP, *Vie de J.-C.* vol. ii. 184. This opinion does not seem to us justified, but it is tenable and we were obliged to notice it here.

[5] JOHN vii. 8. "But I go not up to this festival day: because my time is not yet fulfilled."

[6] MATTHEW xv. 21–31; MARK vii. 24–37.

prohibition to teach which had been issued against Him.[1] Afterwards, when with downcast heads they had gone away, He gave utterance to that magnificent protest so easy to understand after His silence but just previously, "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life."[2]

The Sanhedrists had long been insensible to all protest, and their hatred would not halt on the road. They wanted another sentence against their adversary, and its coming was not long delayed.

The major excommunication, called "Schammata,"[3] placed the condemned beyond the law. Henceforth, every one had the right to attack him and to put him to death. It was the anathema of which the Scripture speaks,[4] the execration, the rejection by the community of the faithful, for time and for eternity. Hence Rabbi Maimonide, going beyond Rabbi Ascher,[5] observes that the judges hesitated to pronounce it, no matter what the crime submitted for their judgment.[6]

Once it was decided upon in the Great Council, it was published with funeral ceremony at the doors of the Synagogues, in the presence of the congregation, convoked by the sound of trumpets. The pursuit of the guilty then began immediately, and he was obliged to seek safety in exile, for the land of Israel

[1] JOHN viii. 6. "But what sayest thou? And this they said tempting him, that they might accuse Him. But Jesus, bowing himself down, wrote with his finger on the ground."

[2] Id. viii. 12. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

[3] An expression derived from two words: "*Scam, mithah — ibi mors*" (tract *Moed Katon*, fol. 340, 17), which indicated the condemnation to death. See *Apparatus biblicus*, iii. 534, col. 2.

[4] JOSHUA vii. 17; ACTS APOSTLES i. 20; I COR. v. 5; GAL. i. 8, etc.; PSALM lxvi. 26–29 and cviii. 8–10.

[5] *Tosapht Pesachim*, fol. 130. [6] *Madda*, c. vii. Sect. ii.

had become inhospitable for him, and even his ashes might not find therein a grave.[1]

It is evident, according to the Gospel of St. John,[2] that the Sanhedrim had decided to arrest Jesus from the 28th September of the year 33,[3] for we find them on that day sending some servants of the Temple to apprehend him, but who did not dare to lay hands on him.

Sentence of death could not be long delayed after this decree, as Our Lord reproached them, the next day, and justly, for they tried to stone him even in the Temple, before the close of the day.[4]

After the cure of the man born blind, they repeated the attempt, but with no greater success;[5] however, it had the effect of causing our Saviour to retire beyond the Jordan to the place where the Precursor had at first baptized.[6] The major excommunication had not yet been pronounced, but it is clear that it was in the minds of all, so much so, that the Apostles, when they saw their Master recross the Jordan at the call of the sisters of Lazarus, could not conceal their astonishment at this fatal imprudence.[7]

They were not much mistaken. Death was lying in wait for him at the threshold of the tomb from which he was going to snatch his friend. The raising of Lazarus brought the fury of the Scribes and the

[1] OTHO, *Lex Rabbi*, p. 21. *Ap.* LEMANN, p. 50.

[2] JOHN vii. 32. "The rulers and Pharisees sent ministers to apprehend him." Comp. viii. 20, "No man laid hands on him."

[3] The 24th October, according to CHEVALLIER, *Récits évangéliques*, p. 314.

[4] JOHN viii. 40. "Now, you seek to kill me." Id. 59.

[5] Id. x. 31. "The Jews then took up stones to stone him."

[6] To Bethbara, JOHN x. 39–40. "They sought therefore to take Him; and He escaped out of their hands. And He went again beyond the Jordan," etc.

[7] JOHN xi. 8. "The Jews but now sought to stone thee: and goest thou thither again?" Id. ibid. 16. "Let us also go that we may die with him."

Pharisees to a climax. They assembled at the house of the High Priest, Caiaphas, at his villa of Djebel-el-Qoubour,[1] on Thursday, 19th February of the year 34,[2] and there confided to one another their anger and their fears. The scene is too striking not to be described in full.

"What do we?" they said, "for this man doeth many miracles; if we let him alone so, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and our nation."

Their anxiety was truly patriotic and worthy of admiration! Their president undertook to dispel their fear.

"You know," he said, "nothing. Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not." And this he spoke not of himself but, being the high priest of that year, he prophesied.

The wretched Caiaphas was neither clear-sighted nor yet wicked enough to find this solution of himself, as Saint John remarks, with I know not what of grave irony; but in virtue of his office as High Priest, he possessed the spirit of divination, and he prophesied that Jesus should die for the salvation of his nation, or rather for the salvation of the newly formed people of the children of God scattered over the face of the earth.

"From that day, therefore, they devised to put him to death."[3] Does this mean that the sentence of outlawry had been officially pronounced against him at the close of the meeting presided over by Caiaphas?

[1] Mount of Tombs, which Christians call the Hill of Evil Counsel.

[2] CHEVALLIER, *Récits évangélique*, p. 371. SEPP, vol. ii. p. 217.

[3] JOHN xi. 46–56. RENAN, *Vie de Jésus*, 367. A. WEILL, *Moïse et le Talmud*, 181. (The latter quotes the Talmud with regard to the excommunication of Jesus under the rubric; tract *Sanhedrin*, Book vi. fol. 43. *L'Apparatus biblicus*, vol. i. p. 539, col. 1, quotes it, pointing out the folio, 107.)

The Talmudists seem to say so, but the Gospel narrative hardly permits the supposition, and, as we shall see presently, Holy Thursday is a more probable date for the solemn act which was to separate Jesus from the Synagogue and from Israel. And this would still accord with the *Talmud*, for the latter relates that the public crier repeated, every morning, during forty days, the sentence pronounced against Our Lord. Be it as it may, the moment had not yet arrived for Him to die, His hour, that hour which He had chosen and of which He had so often spoken to His disciples, had not yet come. Therefore, He remained apart, afterwards descending towards the Jordan which He crossed and penetrated into the desert region of Ephraim.[1] David had, of old, taken refuge in it to avoid the pursuit of Absalom, and the ungrateful son himself had gone there to meet death at the hands of Joab.

Here the Divine Master remained about six weeks. He was comparatively safe there, in the territory of Antipas, the Tetrarch of Galilee and of Perea. It was a time of supreme recollection and of final preparation for the sacrifice which He was to accomplish. The true Paschal Lamb, He awaited the Paschal feast to offer Himself for immolation. When there wanted but six days to it, He took once more the road to Jerusalem, and came to Bethany, there to wait the hour of that triumphal entry into the second Temple, foretold by the prophet Malachi.[2]

The Pharisees no longer restrained their wrath. "Do you see," they said to one another, "that we prevail nothing? behold the whole world is gone

[1] II KINGS xviii. 6. This Ephraim must not be confounded with the modern Taiyibeh, adjoining the ancient Bethel, as several writers have done, —following RENAN, *Vie de Jésus*, 369.

[2] MALACHI iii. 1; ZACH. ix. 9.

after him!"[1] This was still worse after the reproaches which He had heaped on them before the people, who were trembling at once with enthusiasm and with terror. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like to whited sepulchres which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness! You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?"[2] He had spoken thus on Tuesday. The next day,[3] the Scribes, Pharisees, and Ancients met in solemn assembly at the house of the High Priest, Caiaphas, and deliberated on the method of putting the audacious preacher to death. They agreed on the main point of the question, their only hesitation was as to the moment to be chosen. "Not on the festival day," they said, "lest perhaps there should be a tumult among the people."[4] They were afraid of the people who, after all, might easily turn against them; and above all, they were afraid of the Romans who would interfere to suppress sedition. Whilst they were disputing, a man entered unexpectedly who said to them, "What will you give me and I will deliver him unto you?"[5]

This was Judas of Kerioth, one of Our Lord's disciples, the chosen confidant of the Apostolic College, and, therefore, thoroughly conversant with the habits of the Master and of those belonging to Him. He, more than any one, could save appearances, and remove all embarrassment. His offer was accepted, the price agreed upon, and the hour fixed for the evening of the following day. Why not at once? They re-

[1] JOHN xii. 19.
[2] MATTHEW xxiii. 23–33.
[3] Wednesday, 16th March (12 Nisan).
[4] MATTHEW xxvi. 5.
[5] Same, xxvi. 14–15; MARK xiv. 10; LUKE xxii. 4.

quired time, that they might be able to impress the multitude by one great stroke. These hypocrites, even when unmasked, could not lay aside their acting, and they were quite as much occupied with the staging of the crime as with its perpetration.

Thursday morning,[1] 13 Nisan (17th March), beheld the faithful grouped around the doors of the four hundred synagogues of Jerusalem,[2] whither they had been summoned by the trumpets of the Levites. A Priest appeared on the threshold, and in a voice of thrilling sadness declared Jesus of Nazareth, the seducer and false prophet,[3] separated from the people in life and in death.

Such is, at least, as we understand it, the narrative of the *Talmud*, to which nothing can be objected, except the silence of the Evangelists, who were accustomed to pass over what every one must have known or recollected, as belonging to the national customs. The greater number of the historians of Christ have accepted this testimony of the Jews against themselves, and we cannot do otherwise.

[1] Thursday was one of the Assembly days, and also one of solemn prayer (*Apparat. biblic.* 453, col. 2).

[2] Jerusalem contained, besides the Temple, 460 synagogues for service of the poor and the stranger (tract *Berakhoth*, fol. 8). SEPP, iii. 220. The Acts (vi. 9) mention those of the "Libertini," of the "Cyreneans," of the "Alexandrians." The tract *Megillath*, fol. 73, also mentions the last. Mount Sion had seven for its share (S. EPIPHAN., *De Mensuris*, xiv. 170).

[3] TALMUD, tract *Sanhedrin*, Book vi. fol. 43. This was the usual form of the excommunication *Schammatah*, according to the same tract, fol. 7. SEPP, *Vie de N. S. Jésus-Christ*, ii. 220; CHEVALLIER, *Récits*, 377. These two writers fix Saturday, 21st February, as the date of the solemn excommunication, following the *Talmud* which, according to them, places it forty days before the death of Jesus. This seems to us an error, and our account agrees better with all the facts. Except at the great assemblies of the Pasch, Pentecost, and the Dedication, we cannot see how the four hundred and sixty synagogues could have managed to collect any number of persons whatever.

All doubt therefore is at an end. The Eternal Wisdom has been placed in the pillory, charged with having accepted and preached error. Innocence itself has been condemned to death as guilty of odious crime. The Saviour of Israel and of the world has been proclaimed, before all, as a danger and as a ruin to those whom He must have most loved.

A tremendous lesson for the pride of human reason! An ineffable consolation for souls who are bending beneath the weight of injustice, of calumny, and of persecution! Can we find a better moment in which to repeat with the Prince of the Apostles, kneeling before his forsaken Master, "To whom shall we go?" — for light and strength, since "Thou hast the words of eternal life."[1]

Lying thus under sentence of death, Jesus did not go to the Temple, nor even to Jerusalem, during the day of Thursday. In the evening, at nightfall, with precautions which the Gospel carefully notes,[2] and which seem to have been intended to elude the vigilance of Judas, He directed His steps towards the Upper City where He willed to celebrate the last Pasch with His disciples, a true repast of lepers or of proscribed men, rendering supreme homage to the law which was rejecting them, and which they wished, nevertheless, to fulfil, even to the end.[3]

It might be said that the Master was hiding to avoid being surprised by His enemies. He only wished to give His Apostles, and through them, the Christians of all ages, a lesson in prudence. No one should anticipate God's hour by foolishly braving men. But if He thus waited for the appointed mo-

[1] JOHN vi. 69.

[2] MATTHEW xxvi. 18; MARK xiv. 13; LUKE xxii. 7.

[3] LE CAMUS, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.* iii. 157; FOUARD, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.* ii. 251.

ment, it was easy to remember that He had Himself fixed it on several occasions, and again on the evening before, by returning to Bethany.[1] He alone was master of events which He directed according to His will, and to make this obvious He prepared the table of the Last Supper in the very shadow of the High Priests' palace, as if to defy them to lay hands on Him before the hour of His choice. He desired, it would seem, to justify His words to the full.

"No man taketh my life from me, I lay it down of myself."[2] He was not to be apprehended in Sion, easy as it would have been to effect His capture there; the place as well as the hour had been designed beforehand by Himself,[3] and Judas might collect, at his ease, the guards of the Temple to lead them to the Garden of Gethsemani.

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 2. "You know that after two days shall be the pasch; and the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified."

[2] JOHN x. 17–18. "I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me," etc.

[3] MATTHEW xxxi. 54–56; ISAI. liii. 10; JEREM. iv. 20.

SECOND BOOK

GETHSEMANI

CHAPTER I

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANI

"Then Jesus came with them into a country place which is called Gethsemani." — MATTHEW xxvi. 36.

"Over the brook Cedron where there was a garden into which He entered with His disciples." — JOHN xviii. 1.

JERUSALEM is built on a kind of promontory, overlooking, on the east and on the south, deep valleys, of which the best known, that of Jehoshaphat or Cedron, separates the Holy City from Mount Scopus and from the Mount of Olives. This valley, which is fairly wide just opposite the first of these hills, narrows by degrees until it becomes nothing but a ravine at the point where it joins Wadi er Rabâbi, near Bir-Eyoub (the En-Rogel of the Scripture).[1] It is traversed through its entire length by a torrent known as the Cedron, or Blackstream, whose waters, very much diminished in volume at the present day, flow into the Dead Sea by way of Wadi

[1] JOSUAH xv. 7. Here it was that Jeremias concealed the sacred fire at the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity and that Nehemias found it, seventy years later (II MACC. i. 21). Wadi er Rabâbi is the Hai of JOSUAH viii. 31. Jophet was the lower and pleasantest part.

en Nahr, a succession of desolate gorges which begin at the junction of the two upper valleys.[1]

On the eastern side, three hundred and fifty feet above the torrent hidden below among the cedars,[2] rose the indestructible ramparts of the Temple which commanded the sanctuary with its marble porticos and its golden roof. Eastward, the wooded slopes of the Mount of Olives gently inclined, as if weighed down with their smiling burden of villas and gardens.

At the present day, the valley is but a desert bordered on the east and west by arid slopes scattered over with ruins and with tombs. The ruins of Solomon's Wall support the dilapidated platform of the Haram, and on the roads to Bethany trees of stunted, sickly growth at long distances apart now afford the only shade.

At the time of Jesus Christ, as in our day, a bridge connected the two banks, quite close to Absalom's Tomb, that empty sepulchre which cast a shadow over the freshness and brightness of the scene. At the distance of a few paces to the north, on the left bank and so close to the edge that in high floods the water reached the fence, a vast garden[3] surrounded one of the villas which were scattered in profusion over the side of the mountain.[4] The name of Gethsemani, oil-

[1] According to some, the Cedron owes its name to the cedars which bordered it; *Torrentem cedrorum:* torrent of the cedars, or *which traverses a cedar forest, Cedretum* (the Septuagint and Josephus). The planting of these cedars is attributed to Solomon.

[2] The cedars of the Mount of Olives were famous. The *Talmud* of Jerusalem (*Taanith* ix. 8) has preserved the remembrance of two of these trees. Innumerable turtle doves nested in their branches and a kind of bazaar was held under their shade for the convenience of pilgrims. Renan (*Vie de Jésus*, 341) forgets to mention that these stalls, *chânujoth*, belonged to the High Priests who unworthily took advantage of the piety of the purchasers. FARRAR, *Life of Christ*, 407.

[3] JOHN xviii. 1 (κῆπος, *hortus*).

[4] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* V. xii. 2, VI. i. 2.

press,[1] sufficiently indicates the nature of this estate, where the harvest of olives alone sufficed to keep a mill at work independently of the other resources. The terms used by the two first Evangelists denote, in fact, a farm, and at the same time, a country seat, as often happens in the East where the gardens are very different from our ideas.[2] The introduction of Greek customs into Palestine had, undoubtedly, modified the traditional arrangements on the estates of princes and nobles, but for those of lesser rank, the walks laid out by line, the groups of trees artificially formed, the marble basins with water springing from them, were singularities more for astonishment than for imitation.

Provided that the garden had shade and verdure, it mattered very little whether the trees were chosen and arranged in a scientific manner; especially if they were loaded with good fruit on the days when the crops were gathered, or at vintage-time. The olives grew side by side with lemons, figs, walnuts, and pomegranates.[3] The vines alone sometimes bore evidence of symmetrical arrangement, thus verifying the words of Isaias when he speaks of bowers formed by the vine.[4] The lily, the rose, the anemone blossomed in company with the lilac, the henna, the castor-oil plant, and the myrtle,[5] poplars bordered the walks, and palm-trees waved their parasol-like branches above the sycamore and cypress.[6] These primitive gardens are still to be seen all through

[1] "Gath-Schemâne," now "Bostân-es-Zeïtoun" in Arabic, "Garden of Olives," also, "Dsches Manijeh."

[2] MATTHEW xxvi. 36; MARK xiv. 32 (χωρίον, *villa*, *prædium*). — Compare RENAN, *Vie de Jésus*, 310.

[3] II ESDRAS ix. 25. "Vineyards and olive-yards and fruit-trees in abundance." See CANTIC. iv. 12–13 and vi. 10.

[4] ISAI. i. 8; II KINGS iv. 25.

[5] CANTIC. vi. 1; ECCL. xxiv. 10; ISAI. xli. 19, etc.

[6] PSALM i. 3; JOEL i. 12; JOHN xii. 12.

the East, shut in by limestone walls, or formidable hedges of prickly cactus. A door always closed, forbade admittance to strangers, but not to friends who knew how to open it, and who came to rest themselves by the fountains, amidst the coolness of the water and the foliage. The story of Susannah makes us fairly acquainted with these various particulars[1] so familiar to travellers in Palestine and Chaldea. Gethsemani must have been one of those country seats whither the inhabitants of Jerusalem were accustomed to retire during the summer heat, but which were deserted during the cold season, from November to the end of March — or were only visited during the scorching hours of the day or whilst the harvest lasted. Although the Gospel makes no mention of a dwelling, still, Jewish customs and traditions authorize us in supposing a habitation on this estate, where the Divine Master might take shelter from the cold and damp when He came to pass the night there with His disciples, but there is no precise statement by which we can judge of its importance.[2]

It was His usual resting-place, when He was going up to Jerusalem at festival times, and when circumstances did not permit Him to finish the day with His friends at Bethany.[3] Perhaps, the villa of Cedron formed part of the property of Lazarus,[4] or of some other disciple, as those think who attribute the ownership to the Mother of Mark, the Evangelist. Perhaps, even, it was one of the possessions of the House of David, where Jesus found Himself once more at

[1] DANIEL xiii. 7–21, 54–59. Compare MASPÉRO, *Archéologie égyptienne*, pp. 15–16; FARRAR, *Life of Christ*, p. 392; SMITH, *Dictionary*, see *Garden*; STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 214.

[2] CORNELIUS A LAPIDE, *In Matth.*, xxvi. 36.

[3] JOHN xviii. 1–2. "Jesus had often resorted thither together with His disciples."

[4] GRESWELL, *Harmonia Evangelica*; FARRAR, *Life of Christ.*

home by reason of the right exercised by His family before they transmitted it to collateral descendants. The laws regulating property [1] in Palestine allow of this hypothesis, and examination of the facts makes it almost certain.

In fact, the Garden of Gethsemani contained, according to the most remote tradition, a grotto in which the Great Victim would soon enter into His Agony. This grotto, situated to the north of the olive-grove, bordered, as can also be proved, on the cave of sepulture where the ashes of Joachim and Anna were already resting, and which Mary herself had chosen as her last resting-place. Now, as we know, tombs were usually excavated on the land belonging to those for whom they were destined, [2] and consequently the ground wherein lay the remains of the ancestors of Jesus had formed part of their property. The Saviour no longer owned it, [3] but it had probably become the property of some other descendant of David, if it had not remained in the possession of Joachim's second daughter, [4] and the garden-gates would readily open to the son of the former owners, a relative and a friend, in whom it was hoped the greatness of his race and the prosperity of Israel would be revived.[5]

This is why Judas had no hesitation in leading the Sanhedrists and their escort straight to the spot at the moment which he considered favorable for the accomplishment of his treason.

[1] NUMBERS xxvii. 6, and foll.

[2] KIRCHMANN, *De funeribus Romanorum*, lib. ii. c. 20.

[3] MATTHEW viii. 20. "The son of man hath not where to lay his head."

[4] Mary, the wife of Cleophas (JOHN xix. 25), the mother of James, of Jude, of Joseph, and of Simon (MATTHEW xxvii. 56, MARK xv. 40).

[5] JOHN xiii. 13. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel."

When Jesus, coming from Jerusalem by the Bethany high road, opened the garden-gate, it was about ten o'clock. The moon was beginning to shed its first beams over the Mount of Olives, still leaving the depths of the valley wrapped in that luminous shadow of which the nights in northern regions can give no idea. Beneath the trees, however, the darkness was impenetrable, oppressing the heart as with the sense of threatened danger. Before plunging into it, the Master paused for an instant to cast one last look towards the Temple, which the planet now at its full was tinting with the most varied hues. Truly, that must have been a marvellous sight. The walls of Solomon, which Herod had increased in height, rose proudly, wearing that rose tint which time has not yet utterly effaced. The Eastern gate was opened by means of bronze folding doors preceded by long ascents and great flights of steps which led to the Porch of the Gentiles. All along the top ran the porticos of marble and of cedar with their columns multiplied by an optical delusion. Then over all, shooting into the sky, like obelisks, rose the high towers of the Pylon, which the priests alone crossed in order to enter the Sanctuary. The rays caught the spires of the pinnacle, the embrasures of the galleries, the carving of the doors, and caused the immense casket of ivory and gold to be reflected against the sky as it were on a tapestry of dark blue, strewn with golden spangles. In the calm of this night of spring, The Divine Majesty seemed to rest, clement and tender, on the throne prepared by His chosen people. Alas! it was the last touch of despised mercy, and soon the veil, torn asunder, would reveal to all eyes that the Holy of Holies was empty and that Jerusalem was abandoned.

But at the moment when Jesus was directing to it

His last salutation,[1] the Temple was still the house of the True God, His only dwelling-place amongst men. In union with the Prophet, the Redeemer offered His homage and His supplications[2] at the Altars of His Father. On the threshold of the place of His Agony, His eyes turned to the Holy Hill whence succor was to come to Him.[3]

He entered, followed by eleven faithful disciples, but it did not seem fit to Him to call them all to be witnesses of His trial; He left eight of the number behind, simply saying to them, "Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray."[4] Then, taking with Him Peter, James, and John, He went a few paces through the trees to a rock sheltered probably by a clump of trees, where He paused, with His head bowed down as beneath a load of unconquerable depression, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death," He said to them; "stay you here and watch with me."[5] No one dared to ask Him the cause of this sadness. They felt they were in the presence of a mystery which they did not venture to penetrate. The choice which separated them from their brethren as formerly on Mount Tabor, revealed to them the solemnity of the present hour, but they could not define it; and they followed with anxious eyes the Master's course beneath the olives. He went away slowly, bent with fatigue, one moment lost in the shadow, the next reappearing in

[1] The Jews were in the habit of saluting the Temple when they first came in sight of it, and when it was fading from view (*Talmud*, treatise *Berakhoth*).

[2] PSALM lxxxiii. 1. "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts; my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord."

[3] Id. cxx. 1. "I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to me."

[4] MATTHEW xxvi. 36. There existed formerly a chapel on the spot known as the *Apostles' Rest*, quite close to Absalom's tomb.

[5] MATTHEW xxvi. 37–38. "My soul is sorrowful even unto death, stay you here and watch with me."

the light, like a phantom wandering on the confines of the tombs amongst which He seemed to be nearly lost. He stopped for an instant beneath a tree, knelt down, and began to pray. They heard sighs and supplications issuing from His lips, by which they recognized an anguish which filled their own hearts.[1] All at once a sudden resolution, according to the expression of the Gospel, led Him to go away from them to the distance of a stone's throw,[2] that is to say, about fifty paces towards the further end of the garden.

In the most remote and lonely part of this solitude a cave faced the south, scarcely separated by a stone partition from the grotto wherein reposed the mortal remains of Joachim and Anne.[3]

The rather elevated arch rested on natural pillars which divided it into several naves, like a temple. It was a spot favorable to meditation and to prayer, well known to the Apostles and the frequent witness of Our Saviour's prayer.[4] Often had they seen Him enter therein to pour out His Heart, before extending Himself, wrapped in His mantle, to snatch a few moments' sleep. But at that moment, the Master's

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 39. "And going a little further, he fell upon his face praying." Farrar (*Life of Christ*, p. 393) recalls a tradition not mentioned by Liévin, which places this tree at the angle formed by the two roads which lead to Bethany, that is to say, facing the pilgrim a little to the right as he enters the actual garden.

[2] LUKE xxii. 41. "And he was withdrawn away from them a stone's cast."

[3] A deserted sepulchre according to M. DE VOGUÉ, *Les Églises de Terre Sainte*, 313, and CASTELA, *Le Sainct Voyage de Hierusalem*, book ii. p. 162; KIRCHMANN, *De funeribus Romanorum*, book ii. c. 22. The ancient opening is now walled up; entrance is afforded by a more recent opening to the northeast.

[4] QUARESMIUS, *Elucid. Terræ Sanctæ*, ii. 160; ARCULPH, CASTELA, etc. Arculph speaks of tables of stone still to be seen in his time, and which would have served for the repasts of the Master and His disciples.

disappearance into the obscurity frightened them. Pious curiosity led them to draw nigh in order to help Him in case of need; and thus it was that they must have perceived Him kneeling, and afterwards, prostrate with His face to the ground, and that they heard those mysterious words, "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me."[1] In fact, there seems no reason to doubt that the sorrowful secret was surprised by at least one of the disciples, and, strange to say, by the self-same one who has preserved nothing of this touching scene in his Gospel. Saint John affects to ignore the agony of Jesus; he does not even allude to it, as if he feared to lower the Divine Ideal which he was proposing to the admiration and worship of the faithful of his time.[2] It would seem that he feared by showing the Saviour in such humiliation to lessen the evidence of His divinity. Perhaps also it was too painful to him to exhibit the defection of the two other apostles, of their chief and of his own brother, to every one, — the more so that he had to confess to himself his own inconstancy; because, as he had not the constancy to watch until the end, he was not able to see everything. Thus is it usually with human friendships; they accomplish with difficulty their work of vigilance and of consolation. Rarely is it that they are not discouraged at the first difficulties.

John had glided to the entrance of the grotto, the extent of which permitted him to keep at a sufficient distance so as not to be perceived. The cavity

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 39; LUKE xxii. 41.

[2] See the xviii. chapter of Saint John; not a word is found there relating to the Agony of Jesus. However, it is quite evident that Saint Matthew and Saint Luke could have only learned the details of the agony from Saint Peter, Saint James, or Saint John, and the latter is at once thought of, for the very reason of the silence which he maintains in his Gospel.

measured about 14 yards in length by 8 or 9 in width, and the part where Jesus lay was almost at the end.[1] Through the opening, the moon's reflection illuminated the interior, whilst the well-beloved disciple, hidden in the shadow, could believe that he was invisible, — a delusion which was soon dispelled after the Resurrection, but at the actual time he thought that he alone possessed the secret.

By a fortunate disposition of Providence, the place which witnessed the agony, and was venerated from the beginning of the first centuries, has not suffered the changes which ill-ordered piety has but too often inflicted on the holy places in Palestine. A chapel was built over it in the time of Constantine, the ruins of which were still to be seen at the beginning of the twelfth century.[2] The Crusaders did not rebuild it. They confined themselves to decorating the sides of the grotto with paintings now quite effaced. It may therefore be asserted, if tradition is to be relied on, that the aspect of this spot is the same as at the moment when the Son of Man came to meditate for the last time on the bitterness of His sacrifice. The compendious ornamentation bestowed upon it takes away nothing of its primitive character; and the altar which marks the place of the sweat of Blood, does not prevent us from kissing the rock on which fell the drops from the Divine Brow.[3] These arches have re-echoed the sighs of Jesus, have been illuminated by the apparition of the Angel, and have witnessed the

[1] Fr. Liévin, *Guide*, 1, p. 264, and M. de Vogué, op. cit. 313. Lortet (*La Syrie d'aujourd' hui*), without giving his reasons, makes out that the grotto of the agony was a press-house.

[2] Sœvulf saw them in 1102. He says, with regard to this, that all the churches in the neighborhood of Jerusalem were destroyed during the wars with the Mussulmans.

[3] Before the principal altar this inscription is engraved on the stone: "Et factus est sudor ejus sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram."

sealing of the compact with the Will of Man and that of God.[1] Holy stones, whose nakedness is more precious than any earthly splendor, because there is nothing to divert my attention from the great sight which I wish to contemplate! Here, I really hear and see my Saviour; my soul with His becomes sorrowful even unto death; my knees bend involuntarily on this rock upon which my tears also fall. I am at His side, I try to console and sustain Him, and if He sink down, I shall fall with Him, in His divine arms, pressed to His Divine Heart, a victim of expiation, like Him, for my sins and those of the world.

Unfortunately, the Garden of Gethsemani has not enjoyed the same immunity; however, no matter how precious it may be, it is still permissible to give it a lower place in the thought of God and in our own. Our Saviour has often conversed there with His disciples, and prayed there for us; the trees which shade it have witnessed the preludes to His Passion; but if He watered them with His tears, He did not sanctify them with His Blood. Judas concealed his treason within them, and their shade favored the flight of the Apostles; but the grotto saw Jesus weep over the loss of the traitor, whilst He prepared the way for the return of His erring friends.

But of what use is it to institute a comparison or an opposition between these sacred spots? Is it not better to blend them in our veneration, while we regret that they have not been left equally untouched? Wherever the Divine Feet of Jesus have touched the earth, we would fain see their traces as plainly as when they were first imprinted; but, since it cannot be so, let us thank Providence for the half-effaced

[1] M. DE VOGUÉ, *Les églises de la Terre Sainte*; see GUÉRIN, *La Terre Sainte*, etc.

vestiges by which we are able to recognize the passing of the Redeemer.

Of the olive grove which formed the most considerable part of the garden, there now remain but eight trees,[1] falling into decay, but which yield every year a fairly large crop of fruit. "Their trunks are enormous; the largest measuring 30 feet in circumference. They have but little bark; and were it not for leaves and branches, they might easily be taken for pieces of the rock, which they resemble in form and color.[2] No matter what has been said to the contrary, there is nothing to prevent us regarding them as the contemporaries of the last visit of Jesus to Gethsemani. Titus, it is true, caused to be cut down all the trees around Jerusalem which he required for the construction of his engines of war, or which might impede the operations of the siege.[3] But we must not take the words of Josephus in too absolute a sense. He had already said precisely the same thing about the felling of the timber by the Romans during Pompey's siege. The part devastated was that running from Scopus to the high-road of Jaffa, to the north and west of the city. On the east, the tenth legion was content with occupying the heights at ten stadii from the ramparts, and descended barely half-way down the hill to construct the wall which prevented all communication with the Jews from without.[4]

[1] Chateaubriand saw nine of them; Marmont only found eight, of which two were 25 ft. in circumference. The Franciscans own the field of olive-trees which descends to the Cedron; this field, now separated from the garden properly so called, was formerly included in it, as well as the adjacent ground of the Blessed Virgin's tomb above the grotto of the Agony.

[2] Fr. LIÉVIN, *Guide* i. 268.

[3] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* V. xii. 1.

[4] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* V. xxxi. 2; FOUARD, *Vie de J.-C.* ii. 299; SAULCY, *Derniers jours de Jérusalem.*

There remained then between this wall and the Cedron, a space of more than 1750 feet in depth, within the limits of which the groves had nothing to fear from the soldiers of Titus.[1] Besides being occupied by the grand guard of the Jewish army, they were also protected by the firing from the Temple ramparts, and we do not see how the besiegers could have been allowed to practise cutting down trees, a very useless proceeding moreover, for it would have been impossible to carry away the fallen timber. Josephus, notwithstanding that he is so circumstantial and so desirous of exalting the courage of the legionaries, nowhere makes allusion to exploits performed from such a motive. He speaks, on the contrary, of attempts at flight which the wood left standing must have favored, and of the Romans being suddenly surprised in their entrenchments by the Jews, who had no doubt hidden in the orchards.[2]

Therefore the devastation ordered by Titus does not weaken the tradition in favor of the ancient trunks of Gethsemani.

It is well known that the olive-tree defies time, not only by putting forth branches even when cut down to the root, but also by preserving its first appearance. The ancients called them immortal.[3] With regard to these particular ones, we can prove that they date back at least to the seventh century, that is to say, before the conquest of Palestine by the Mohammedans;[4] the proofs are irrefutable.

In fact, every olive-tree planted since the conquest is taxed to the value of half its crop, whilst the trees

[1] This figure is even under the actual distance, as the stadium was equal to nearly 200 yards.

[2] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* VI. xiv. 1–xv. 1, 2.

[3] PLINY, *The Naturalist*, book xvi. 85, etc.

[4] In 636, under the leadership of the Caliph Omar.

which existed at that period were never taxed beyond a medin.[1] Now the tax on the olive-trees of Gethsemani has never exceeded eight medins, and they are the undisputed property of the Latin Christians.[2] They were in existence, therefore, twelve centuries ago, and there are no grounds for the assertion, made gratuitously, that they were planted during the period which elapsed from Saint Helena to the Caliph Omar. If the Christians had had the idea of making the plantation with the object of preserving the remembrance of Our Saviour's agony, there would remain some evidence of it, just as there remains of the innumerable foundations of Constantine and of Justinian. Now, even at Gethsemani itself, we discover traces of the oratories built on the Resting-Place of the Apostles and on the grotto of the Agony, both of which have alike disappeared; but there is nothing to tell us of the pious care which the founders of these oratories would have taken of the ruined olive-trees. To speak truly, it would have been unnecessary, for the old stems, if any had remained, would have sent forth shoots which would have had plenty of time to develop into large trees.

The silence of Saint Jerome, when relating the pilgrimage of Saint Paula in Palestine, and remarking her prayer at the Holy Places of Jerusalem, with regard to the olive-trees of Gethsemani proves absolutely nothing against their existence at that time. It is easy to understand this silence. The Doctor's sole idea was to point out the principal stations of the saintly traveller; and he has omitted, with delib-

[1] The medin was an ancient Turkish coin worth about fifteen French deniers.

[2] CHATEAUBRIAND, *Itinéraire;* Fr. LIÉVIN, *Guide;* LAMARTINE, *Voy. en Orient*, etc. The account relating to the Treasury refutes the opinions of Lortet (*La Syrie d'aujourd'hui*), who only allows from 600 to 800 years to these olive-trees.

erate intention, a certain number of places, worthy notwithstanding of being mentioned on account of the devotion with which they inspire the faithful. The only conclusion to be drawn from the preceding is that the grotto of the Agony was regarded by the primitive tradition as the place where the Saviour had bowed beneath the weight of supreme sadness. The piety of the pilgrims of that time did not go astray, as it seems to do at the present day, seeking the traces of Jesus beneath the olive-trees, rather than in the adjacent cave. We do not, however, mean to say that the whole of this ground, from the Tomb of Absalom to that of the Blessed Virgin, was not to them eminently sacred; it had been too often trodden by the feet of God made man, even before it received their last imprint in the hour of His betrayal. But we cannot too often repeat in the very interests of our cause, that our forefathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, Saint Jerome in particular, did not place all these memorials in the same rank, and their silence cannot be used as an argument against the tradition.[1]

It is simpler then and more reasonable to adhere to the belief of the ancient Christian world. The olive-trees of Gethsemani are not only "the oldest on the mountain"[2] and "the most beautiful in the Holy Land,"[3] they are also the most venerable of the evidences of the Passion that can be met with. After the tree of the Cross, as it has been very appro-

[1] Saint Jerome, *Epistola LXXXIV ad Eustochium: Epitaph. Paulæ* Smith, *Dictionary*, see *Gethsemane*. Other writers, more recent and more circumstantial than Saint Jerome, seem not to have paid more attention to the olive-trees of Gethsemani, while admitting, at the same time, their existence and their antiquity. See Castela, *Le Sainct Voyage de Hierusalem*, Book ii. p. 166, etc.

[2] Isambert, *Palestine*, p. 313.

[3] F. Bovet, *Voy. en Terre Sainte*, p. 199.

priately called, no other tree is more worthy of our veneration.[1] The first was deluged with the blood of a God, the second with His tears. The particles of that wood which gave support to the humanity of the Word are impregnated with the perfume which exhales from Him,[2] and should be reckoned amongst the number of relics dearest to our heart. But it is time to fix our looks and our thoughts on the contemplation of the agony into which Jesus has indeed willed to cast His soul, and which began the course of sorrow by which our salvation was to be effected! Before we proceed, however, let us admire the self-possession with which He enters into this ordeal. He descends from Jerusalem, talking familiarly with His disciples, mingling instruction with prophecy, pausing to address now a sublime prayer to His Father, and again, admonitions full of earnest tenderness to His auditors. He leads them to the spot which He has chosen for His apprehension, as He Himself will shortly tell the guards of the Sanhedrim,[3] and nothing is more touching than the reason of this choice. Being man, He has all the sentiments and emotions with which human nature inspires the heart; and as He is near His end, He wishes to spend His last hour amongst the dead belonging to Him, and as He, especially, being a Nazarene, cannot descend into their tomb without contracting legal defilement,[4] He comes as close as possible, to endure His agony, as it were, in their arms, and on their heart. He expects consolation and precept from their grave, as well as from Heaven, showing thus even by evidence that He is

[1] P. JEAN MAUMUS, *Les Mystères du Rosaire,* quoting MGR. MISLIN, *Les Saints Lieux.*

[2] CANTIC. i. 3; LUKE vi. 9.

[3] MARK xiv. 49. "That the Scriptures may be fulfilled."

[4] NUM. xix. 16, vi. 6. The tombs were impure and communicated legal impurity.

the Son of Man, and the Son of God, but also that He lays down His life at His own desire, and it is His Will alone which permits it to be taken from Him.[1]

[1] JOHN x. 17–18. "I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself."

CHAPTER II

THE AGONY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

"Then he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death." — MATTHEW xxvi. 38.

"And being in an agony, he prayed the longer. And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." — LUKE xxii. 43–44.

AGONY, in the ordinary sense of the word, is the supreme struggle of life against death; that period more or less prolonged, during which, one by one, the bonds are broken which bind the soul to the body, a rupture equally painful to the flesh and to the spirit. By comparison, we apply the word "agony" to certain moments of anguish in which it seems as if life must be shattered, although, in reality, it comes forth victorious, at least, inasmuch so that it continues its saddened and darkened course. In both cases, the word retains a terrifying meaning, because it recalls the greatest sense of suffering that nature is able to bear.[1]

Hence it is not astonishing to see the Divine Master seized with sadness and with fear, at the moment when He enters that fatal garden, "terra damnata,"[2] as the ancients called it, in which He was to suffer the throes of the most cruel agony. In taking the human form, the Incarnate Word submitted Himself[3] completely to the laws of humanity. Ac-

[1] MARK xiv. 33. "And he began to fear and to be heavy."

[2] See *Le Pèlerin de Bordeaux* (in 333) which applies this name to the place of the betrayal.

[3] SAINT AUGUSTINE, *De Civitate Dei*, xiv.; SAINT AMBROSE, *Sup. Lucam*, book x. n. 61.

cording to Bossuet, He was so completely God that it was scarcely possible to believe that He was man; this is true, but He was at the same time so completely man that it was scarcely possible to think that He was God.[1] "The flesh of Christ," says Saint Thomas of Aquinas, "was capable of suffering and of death, and consequently His soul was also capable of suffering. All the quiverings of our flesh, all the agitation of our souls: Jesus Christ has felt them, with this sole difference, that His understanding was not disturbed by them, and that no matter how violent the emotion might be, it never succeeded in overcoming His Will."[2] According to the words of Isaiah, he has surely borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows.[3]

The union of His Divinity with His humanity did not suppress the sensitiveness natural to man, unless by particular intervention; it could even, as we are about to see, communicate to it a power of emotion and sorrow which it did not naturally possess. To speak truly, He had never been without the vision of the ordeal which awaited Him in Gethsemani. From the first day of His mortal life, He had foreseen and accepted its awful termination, so that it might be said His Agony began at Bethlehem, hidden from the eyes of every one, but as real as it was on the evening of Holy Thursday. By a merciful Providence, He partially veiled the eyes of His Blessed Mother and of His Apostles, that they might not see, even when with prophetic ray He threw light upon the mystery of His approaching immolation. As He said to the Pharisees, He did not will to spoil the joy of the Bridegroom's friends in His presence; they would soon enough experience anxiety for His going away,

[1] *Élévation* xiv. (18th week).
[2] *Summ. Theol.* iii. q. xv. art. 7, *passim.*
[3] ISAIAH liii. 4.

and regret for his absence.[1] For Himself, it was quite different. The Cross appeared ever more clearly on His horizon, and as we know from His own words, the desire to ascend it increased in Him at every step which brought Him nearer to Calvary.[2]

How then can we explain that invasion of sadness, of which He made the avowal to His disciples at the moment when He entered Gethsemani? Was it then only that His soul began to be sad, and are we to believe that a veil was torn from before His eyes, revealing to Him the full depth of the abyss into which He must descend?

The answer is not hard to find, however little we may reflect. Until this hour, death had been at a distance; now it was extending its hand to seize its victim, and its cold breath was chilling the brow of Jesus. He would not have been truly man if He had not shuddered; the more so that the circumstances of His immolation presented themselves to His mind with all the peculiar clearness which the approach of death imparts; without making the least effort to particularize them, He saw them, or, if you will, He divined them, each and all, at the same time being assailed, as it were, by a flight of ominous birds whose cries and fluttering fatigued Him almost beyond endurance. This is the weariness spoken of by Saint Mark,[3] that uneasiness which the bravest experience in the presence of a riotous crowd, or of the waves which sweep over the bridge of a vessel in distress.[4]

[1] MATTHEW ix. 15, and following.

[2] LUKE xii. 50. "And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished."

[3] MARK xiv. 33. "And he began to fear and to be heavy."

[4] It has been remarked that the word *ἀγωνία* here means the movement of a brave man who finds himself in imminent danger; he is not cast down nor in the least discouraged, but he is startled, he is disturbed, although he resists the fear and the disturbance, and

Death is there; without ever having feared it, it is natural to shudder at its approach, and to find it difficult to regain composure in the disorder created by its irruption. "The imminence of death," says Saint Thomas of Aquinas, "naturally caused Him fear,"[1] and as Saint Jerome remarks, "If He had not experienced that feeling so natural to man, He would not have sufficiently proved the reality of His Incarnation."[2] Let us listen to Bossuet explaining in his matchless words what is taking place at this moment in the Redeemer's soul, "During the whole course of His life, He speaks of His passion with joy; He longs continually for that last hour; it is the hour above all which He calls His hour, as being the end of His mission and which, consequently, He awaits with greater ardor. But it is not necessary, O, Christians! that His soul should be always calm; it is by a great secret dispensation of Providence that He goes to death, trembling, because He must go to meet it as a criminal, because He must Himself be afflicted and troubled. Now, He says, my soul is troubled, '*Nunc anima mea turbata est*,'[3] that is to say, until this hour it had never yet felt any trouble; but now that I must appear as a criminal, it is time that it should be troubled. Therefore, is it troubled beyond all measure by four different passions, by weariness, by fear, by sadness, and by languor. And He began to fear and to be heavy, and He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad."[4]

this resistance itself forms part of his pain and his agony, for the word ἀγών in Greek signifies *struggle, danger*." Fr. LÉTARD, *Tableaux évangéliques*, etc., v. ii. p. 393.

[1] *Summ.* III, q. xv. a. 7. "Fuit quidem timor in Christo respectu mortis imminentis," etc.

[2] In MATTHEW xxvi. "Dominus noster, ut veritatem assumpti hominis probaret, vere quidem contristatus est." THEOPHYLACT., *In Marcum* xiv.

[3] JOHN xii. 27.

[4] MARK xiv. 33; MATTHEW xxvi. 37.

"Weariness casts the soul into a certain kind of trouble which renders life insupportable, and makes every moment burdensome. Fear shakes the soul to its very depths by the image of a thousand torments which threaten it; sadness covers it with a thick veil which causes everything to wear the look of death; it is a kind of dejection, and, as it were, a prostration of all the forces. Such was the state of the Saviour of souls in the Garden of Olives, as He is represented in His Gospel." [1] It was in this state that He advanced towards the cave where He wished to hide His agony from His disciples, judging it useless to scandalize their weakness. It sufficed for Him to know that they were near Him, within call, united in spirit with the prayer He was about to make, and of which they must have understood the exceptional importance.[2] In the meantime He withdrew, slowly pausing, it seems, several times, as if He hesitated at finding Himself alone, in the presence of the chalice of whose bitterness He was about to drink. There are variations to be noticed in the Gospel narrative. Saint Matthew and Saint Mark [3] show us the Saviour retiring to a little distance before He withdrew altogether from the vicinity of the Apostles, as Saint Luke tells us.[4]

Perhaps even His first prayer, as an ancient tradition asserts, was under the olive-trees, and near the spot where Peter, James, and John, reassured by the sight of the Master, allowed themselves insensibly to fall asleep.

[1] BOSSUET, *Premier Sermon pour le Vendredi Saint*, I.

[2] ORIGEN, *Tract. XXXV.* "Nolebat enim longe fieri ab eis, sed juxta eos constitutus orare," etc.

[3] MATTHEW xxvi. 39. "And going a little further." MARK xiv. 35. "And when he had gone forward a little."

[4] LUKE xxii. 41. "And he was withdrawn away from them a stone's cast."

However that may have been, the hour being come to offer Himself to God as the victim of expiation for the sins of men, He knelt down with difficulty, prostrated Himself with His face to the ground, and cried aloud,[1] "O my Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me."[2] The storm had burst, and, to borrow the language of the Scripture, the torrents, bursting their bounds, had begun to assail Him, threatening to submerge Him.[3] "A man," says Bossuet, "at the mercy of several torrents; they thrust Him onwards, they throw Him down, they overwhelm Him."[4] Torrents of iniquity, rolling their muddy waters from all parts of the horizon towards the victim whom they want to engulf. With every billow which strikes against His soul, He grows weaker as He feels the responsibility which He has incurred, and the repulsion of which He is the object on the part of the outraged Divinity, ever increasing. "Behold Him prostrate and cast down, sighing under this shameful load, not daring to look up to Heaven,—so weighed down and loaded is His head with His crimes, that is to say, ours, which have indeed become His."[5]

Has He not in reality substituted Himself for man, and is He not truly responsible for all those iniquities, since He has taken them upon Himself? And that He may thoroughly understand their number and their malice, behold them pass before Him in a kind of dismal procession, with that appalling distinctness with which objects are thrown into relief by the brilliancy of the lightning contending with the dark-

[1] HEB. v. 7.

[2] MATTHEW xxvi. 39. "He fell upon his face praying, and saying: My Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass from me."

[3] PSALM xvii. 5. "The torrents of iniquity troubled me."

[4] BOSSUET, *loc. cit.*

[5] Id. ibid.

ness of night. "He discerned," Bourdaloue tells us, "without confusion and without any intermingling, all the various kinds of sin for which He was about to suffer: the sins of the kings and those of the people; the sins of the rich and those of the poor; the sins of the fathers and of the children; the sins of priests and those of the laity. In these torrents of iniquity He distinguished slanders and calumnies, unchaste acts and adulteries, simony and usury, treachery and revenge. He represented to Himself with all the clearness of His divine penetration, the fits of passion of the proud and ambitious; the profligacy of the sensual and the voluptuous; the impieties of libertines and atheists, the impostures and the malignity of hypocrites." [1]

"Represent to yourself this divine Saviour on whom has fallen all at once the iniquities of the whole world: on one side, all the acts of treachery and perfidy; on the other, all the acts of impurity and sacrilege, the imprecations and blasphemies, — in fine, all the corruption of a nature as depraved as ours. Frightful mass! All coming to overwhelm Jesus Christ! On whatever side He turns His eyes He sees nothing but torrents of sin which are about to fall upon Him." [2]

The Prophet had beheld Him in this deluge, and had heard His despairing appeals: "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul, I stick fast in the mire of the deep; and there is no sure standing. I am come into the depth of the sea; and a tempest hath overwhelmed me. I have labored with crying; my jaws are become hoarse; my eyes have failed, whilst I hope in my God." [3] Does it not seem as if David were commenting on the words of

[1] Bourdaloue, *Premier Sermon sur la Passion*, I.
[2] Bossuet, *Premier Sermon sur le Vendredi Saint*, I.
[3] Psalm lxviii. 1, 4.

the Gospel: "Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this chalice from me."[1] But instead of being removed, the Chalice draws nearer with added bitterness. After the vision of the sins of the world, behold that of the expiations which the Man who has asked that He may represent humanity before the bar of divine justice, has consented to suffer.

Then there unfolds before His eyes that succession of humiliations and of sufferings through which His soul and body must pass before He can fully satisfy that Justice. Like those roaring bulls and those howling dogs of which the Prophet speaks,[2] His enemies appear before Him, drawing after them the crowd which is devoting Him to death.

He hears the yells; He feels the blows; He sees Himself betrayed and deserted; He shivers in the fever of agony; He drinks the gall and vinegar; the hand of triumphant death is clutching Him by the throat and heart. There appears before Him, under a darkened sky, in a stifling atmosphere, in the midst of a circle of blasphemers and unconcerned spectators, a man hanging on a gibbet to which his hands and feet are nailed; his head is crowned with thorns; his veins are drained of blood; he is gasping for breath; his disciples have abandoned him, and although his mother is at his side, yet her presence causes him suffering as well as consolation. This man is Himself, draining to the dregs the Chalice which He asks to be removed, repeating His prayer, "If it be possible, remove this chalice."

"Before going further," continues Bossuet, "in an effort to make it understood how terrible is this Agony, we must remove a false idea of some who

[1] MARK xiv. 36.

[2] PSALM xxi. 13. "Bulls have besieged me roaring." The same, 17. "Many dogs have encompassed me."

believe that the unshaken constancy of the Son of God, sustained by Divine strength, prevented His soul being violently disturbed."

A comparison of the Scripture will remove this objection which is in the mind of almost every one. The Scripture often compares sorrow to an agitated sea, and the Prophet says this expressly of the Son of God in His Passion.

Magna est sicut mare contritio tua,[1] "Great as the sea is thy sorrow." Therefore as His sorrow resembled the sea, it was in His power to suppress sorrow in the same manner as, according to His Gospel, He formerly subdued the waters.

Sometimes, when the storm arose, He commanded the winds and the waves and, says the Evangelist, "there was made a great calm," *facta est tranquillitas magna*.[2] But at other times He acted in a different manner, a nobler and more glorious manner. He let loose the tempests, and permitted the winds to agitate the waves and to pile the billows as high as the heavens, if they could. Meanwhile He walked over them with marvellous security and trod underfoot the angry floods. It is thus that Jesus treated the sorrow of His Passion; He could command the waves, and they would become calm. He could, with one word, assuage His sorrow, and deliver His soul from trouble; but it did not please Him to do so. Seeing that the time of sorrow had arrived, He, indeed, willed to let it loose and to permit it to act upon Him in all its force. He walked over it, it is true, with an assured countenance, but, meanwhile, the floods had risen; His whole soul was disturbed by them, and felt to the quick, even to the utmost refinement of suffering, if I may so speak, the full weight of weariness, all the trembling of fear, all the depression of sadness.

[1] LAMEN. ii. 13. [2] MARK iv. 39.

Therefore, O Christians, do not believe that the constancy which we adore in the Son of God has, in the least, lessened His sorrows. He has overcome them all, but He has felt them all; He has drunk even to the dregs the Chalice of His Passion; He has not allowed a single drop of it to be lost; not only has He drunk of it, but He has foreseen; He has tasted; He has relished, drop by drop, its whole bitterness."[1]

"Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me; but yet, not my will, but Thine be done."[2] Thus nature was conquered; and the agreement of the Father with the Son asserted itself with all the greater splendor. But what was the cost of this victory? He Himself seemed to be afraid. He stood up; His knees were trembling and supported Him with difficulty, His lips were livid, and His hair stood upright. He was quite undone. Almost unrecognizable, staggering, bathed in cold sweat, He dragged Himself to where the three Apostles had remained."[3] After a few moments of watchfulness, sleep had overcome them, and they were sleeping that painful sleep in which we are half conscious of what is taking place; hence it was not difficult to awaken them. "Simon," said He, with sadness, "sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch ye and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."[4] Then, without waiting for an answer, He returned to the grotto to resume His prayer, still the same in substance, but with a variation which it is of consequence to distinguish.

[1] Bossuet, *Premier Sermon pour le Vendredi Saint*, I.
[2] Luke xxii. 42.
[3] Catherine Emmerich, *Douloureuse Passion*, c. ii.
[4] Mark xiv. 37–38.

"My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done." [1]

At first sight, they are indeed the same words, *eundem sermonem*, as Mark says, and yet the sentiment has undergone a profound modification. Jesus no longer asked that the Chalice might pass away, but only that the Will of His Father might be accomplished in Him. He retained, it is true, the conviction of the Divine Omnipotence which could still exempt Him from the ordeal if It so willed; but He was equally convinced of the decision arrived at by the Eternal Wisdom, and He thought above all of the help which He needed to support Him in the agony which this sentence caused Him. As He willed to become security for us, He should pay the whole of our debt. He had already been able to measure its extent and to weigh against it the sufferings to which His acceptation of it condemned him. He should, however, reconsider and place in the scales the efforts which He was about to make, and the results they would have. God would not wish to set snares for Him; His expiation must be perfectly voluntary, and consequently He must know what was demanded from Him.

Alas! He had only seen the least painful part, for He had only had before His eyes the sorrows which were about to burst upon Him in a few moments, and to lead Him to the hour of His death on the Cross. Suffering is not without joy when we suffer for those whom we love, in the hope that in proportion to our suffering will be their gain, and, above all, with the prevision of their gratitude and of their love. Did not Jesus experience that joy, or at least, in accepting sufferings for our sakes, was it not this He desired? Most undoubtedly, and with an ardor in proportion

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 42.

to His love for us. Now, who has ever loved us more, with more ardor, more generosity, or more constancy? Who then had more right to hope that He would benefit us by His Passion and that He would find us grateful? Who then also could be more crushed at the thought that His efforts would be useless and despised?

And yet, without the least doubt, this is the cause of the second agony into which Our Saviour entered. He saw that His sufferings were wasted with regard to a great number of those whom He desired to save, that they would be forgotten, despised, and even blasphemed by the most cherished of these souls to whom He was going to give His blood, as He had given them His Heart.[1]

"That there are," exclaims Bourdaloue, "men, and Christian men, for whom the Passion of Jesus Christ, life-giving as it is, should become unprofitable, is too essential a truth in our Religion to be ignored, and too fatal not to be the subject of our grief. When Our Saviour, from the height of His Cross, about to yield up His soul, sent forth that cry to Heaven, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'[2] there was no one who did not believe that it was the violence of the torture which wrung that complaint from Him, and perhaps we still believe it ourselves. And of what then does He complain? That through the malice of sinners He is deprived of what should be the payment and the reward of the struggles which He has undergone; that millions of men for whom He is suffering will none the less be excluded from the benefits of the Redemption.

"And because, as their Head, He sees Himself in them, and because He regards them, in spite of their

[1] *Premier Sermon sur la Passion*, III.
[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 46.

unworthiness, as members of His Mystical Body, on seeing them abandoned by God, He complains of being so Himself, He complains of that which caused Saint Paul to lament when, in a transport of Apostolic zeal, he wrote to the Galatians, 'Christ is become of no effect to you. The scandal of the cross is thereby made void. *Ergo gratis Christus mortuus est? Ergo evacuatum est scandalum crucis?*'"[1]

If there were ever a sorrowful problem for us to solve, it is that of the madness of mankind, who render useless the sacrifice of a God: and yet, it is impossible for us to deny it, many souls profit nothing by the Redemption: some because they reject it; others because they are careless about it. No one can be saved in spite of himself; and the Apostle gives us the advice, easy to understand, to complete in ourselves, by our good will, what is wanting to the Passion of the Divine Master,[2] that is to say, to apply to ourselves the fruits of it, by freely and generously uniting our will to the will of Our Redeemer, — advice which is thrown away on many, if not on the greater number.

Let us not doubt the Divine mercy and Omnipotence, but, at the same time, let us not forget that the way of perdition is broad and the number of those who follow it, fearful to calculate.[3] Jesus saw it as clearly as He had seen the disorders of humanity and the expiations of which they were the cause. After the fallen angels, the lost souls passed before Him in a whirlwind of sobbing and wailing, drawn towards the abysses into which pardon should never descend to meet repentance. In vain, He stretched

[1] GALAT. v. 2.

[2] COLOSS. i. 24. "And fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ."

[3] MATTHEW vii. 13. "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there are who go in thereat."

forth to them His suppliant hands, appealing to them with ineffable tenderness; they would have nothing from Him, even in the deepest depth of their despair. As a mother whose children are taken from her to be thrown to wild beasts, and who, powerless to defend them, struggles, exhausts herself in cries and tears, and suffers a thousand deaths in the midst of the jeers of the executioners, so Jesus writhed in the grasp of the most horrible suffering. How much easier it was to deliver Himself to the whips, the thorns, and the nails! Why could He not infinitely increase the anguish and the torture to assure the Salvation of those souls whom He loved so fondly? But it might not be; human liberty is an obstacle which obstructs God Himself; and however strong love may be, it is powerless when rejected.

Cruel alternative! He could not avoid the acceptance of this bitterness without renouncing the salvation of those of better will; His death was the price of both; and were there but one to profit by it, the sacrifice must be the same as that offered for the Redemption of all. Moreover, was not this obstinacy in rejecting pardon the gravest of the offences which angered the Divinity? And was it not necessary that He should make satisfaction for it first? To send away the Chalice, therefore, was to send away mercy from those souls who were capable of understanding, of desiring, and of meriting mercy. While His glance was sadly fixed on the reprobates, His heart was with the elect; and His hand, trembling with fear and submission, clasped the bitter Chalice. "My Father," He says with one supreme effort, "if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done."

He did not venture to add, "And not mine." Where was the use of recalling that He could have

wished otherwise?[1] Would it not uselessly aggravate the sacrifice?

A second time, He went forth from the cave. He felt the need of escaping from the gloom, of finding Himself once more in the open air, of seeing His friends again. He soon crossed the space which separated Him from them: He had already opened His lips to pour out His heart; but they were sleeping, and the sound of His footsteps scarcely awakened them.[2] "Why sleep you?" He said to them. Vain question! They knew not what to answer, overcome as they were by irresistible drowsiness.

His heart must have grown still more faint, but yet He had no anger against these poor children of men whose weakness, when not sustained by Him, He knew so well.[3]

He returned with slow steps to the place of His prayer. He felt that all was not finished. The bitterness of the Chalice, wisely mixed by Divine Justice, grew more intense the deeper He drank. Now there remained the bitterness of the dregs promised by the Prophets[4] and which He could not avoid drinking. At the mere thought of this draught His lips shrivelled as if touched with a hot iron, and the fire of the poison seemed to run through His veins. This time, it was the sadness even unto death; His agony was indeed about to begin.

At this moment, the Divine compassion was manifested in a sensible manner. An Angel descended from Heaven and came to kneel beside the martyr, to give Him strength to bear the last struggle.[5]

[1] Saint Ambrose, *in Lucam*, lib. x. [2] Mark xix. 40.
[3] Luke xxii. 46.
[4] Psalm lxxiv. 9; Isai. li. 17.
[5] Luke xxii. 43. "And there appeared to Him an Angel from Heaven strengthening Him. And being in an agony he prayed the longer." Catholic tradition attributes this ministration to the Angel Gabriel (*Breviaire Romain*, 18 March).

Prostrate, with His face to the ground, Jesus was praying, multiplying His appeals to His Father the more earnestly that His voice seemed not to be heard. God was indeed closing His ear and His heart, abandoning His well-beloved Son, the object of all His regard, to the dereliction which He had Himself solicited when He asked to take our place.

Sin has separated man from God; but at the same time, it has taken away from him all support, all consolation on the part of creatures, contrary to the hope with which he had flattered himself of having them at his own discretion, and of using them for his own enjoyment.

If the illusion had been possible, even after the revolt, the time for the illusion had passed. God, who had been set aside for a moment, returned on the scene, absolute master of all things, reclaiming His property, mocking the nakedness and the solitude of the sinner, and carrying away with His friendship, which He withdraws, all peace and all confidence. "Let him suffice now for himself since he has willed to do without God. Let him defend himself against attack and against terror, against deception and sadness, against remorse and despair." God's patience has slowly prepared this vengeance, "*Mihi vindicta et ego retribuam*," "Revenge to me, I will repay."[1] Let him cry now, I will not hear. Let him weep, I will not see him. Let him be in agony; I will not know it; "he put on cursing like a garment; and it went in like water into his entrails; and like oil in his bones. May it be unto him like a garment which covereth him: and like a girdle with which he is girded continually."[2]

Man has escaped this malediction because the Incarnate Word has become his substitute; but this

[1] ROMANS xii. 19. [2] PSALM cviii. 18.

substitution was for the purpose of affording full satisfaction to God for the insults offered to Him. With man by himself no real reparation was possible; but with the Man-God, it was quite different, and humanity could pay its debt even to the last farthing.

Thus, Divine Justice must be pitiless, and was so, in reality — Having become a sinner,[1] if we may so speak, or even, to borrow the words of the Scripture, having become sin by His desire to take our place, Jesus was at that hour rejected by His Father, to the end that He might indeed bear all the weight of our sins, and might justly merit pardon for us. "He was wounded for our iniquities," says the prophet, "and by His bruises we are healed.[2] Hence, Jesus, abandoned by God and man, bore the weight of our iniquities and of the Divine Anger. His spirit and His flesh were in the wine-press. A sweat of blood fell in great drops from His livid brow,[3] and His chest heaved as if He were about to render His last sigh.

"He would most certainly have died," says Bossuet, "from the sole strain of this anguish, if a divine power had not sustained Him, that He might be reserved for further torment; but as He was not to go as far as death, He, at least, went as far as the agony of death, '*factus in agonia.*'"

And what was this agony, so infinitely different to what we behold in other men? In the latter a soul which makes an effort not to be separated from the body is torn from it violently; in the former, the soul, ready to go forth, is authoritatively retained. The souls of the dying struggle against parting from that

[1] II Cor. v 21. "Him that knew no sin, for us he hath *made sin*, that we might be made the justice of God in him."

[2] Isai. liii. 5.

[3] Luke xxii. 44. "And his sweat became *as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground*."

flesh which they love. When death has already seized upon the extremities, the soul retires within; driven from every part, it intrenches itself in the heart, and there it maintains itself; it defends itself; it struggles against death which at last, by one final stroke, drives it forth. And behold, on the contrary, in Our Saviour, while the harmony of the body is disturbed, all its order disarranged, all its vigor relaxed, even to the losing of streams of blood, yet the soul remains by an express order, and by a superior force. Live then, my poor Jesus, live for other tortures which are awaiting you. Reserve something for the Jews who are advancing, and for the traitor, Judas, who is at their head. It is enough for you to have shown sinners that sin, of itself alone, was sufficient to give you the death-blow.[1] This time the Chalice was drained to the dregs; the ordeal was over. The shadows were dispersed, and the calm light which illuminated His soul before this agony shone upon Him once more, strength returned to Him with peace; He felt that He was heard.[2] He was sure, henceforth, of man's redemption, and no longer dreaded the price which He must pay. Thus He returned to His disciples with a calm countenance; He had wiped the blood from His brow, and resumed His ordinary aspect, but, at the same time, with that shade of majestic gravity which became that hour. Hell must have trembled with surprise and rage at seeing Him thus advance. The lamb ready for sacrifice had given place to the lion of Juda,[3] Who was going straight to His adversaries to put them to flight.[4] Another despairing effort might indeed be

[1] *Premier Sermon pour le Vendredi Saint*, 1.

[2] Heb. v. 7.

[3] Apoc. v. 5. "Behold the lion of the tribe of Juda."

[4] Psalm lxvii. 2. "Let them that hate him flee from before his face."

made against Him, but that dismay which presages defeat was already floating in the air. Meanwhile, Peter, James, and John still slept. He contemplated them for a moment with a kind of pity,[1] "Sleep ye now," he said half aloud, "and take your rest."[2] Then after a moment's silence, "It is enough: the hour is come: behold the son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.

"Rise up, let us go. Behold, he that will betray me is at hand."[3]

It was, indeed, the hour. The noise of steps upon the path was making itself heard, and reddish lights were gleaming through the foliage. Another moment, and Judas would have consummated his treason.

[1] THEOPHYLACT., *In Marcum* XIV. [2] MATTHEW XXVI. 45.
[3] MARK XIV. 41–42.

CHAPTER III

JESUS IS APPREHENDED IN GETHSEMANI

"And forthwith, (Judas) coming to Jesus, he said: Hail, Rabbi. And he kissed him. And Jesus said to him: Friend, whereto art thou come? Then they came up, and laid hands on Jesus, and held him." — MATTHEW xxvi. 49, 50.

IT was near midnight. The moon, now at its apogee, was flooding the valley with silvery light. The most profound peace reigned over all nature. The challenge of the sentinels on guard on the ramparts of the Antonia alone disturbed the silence at long intervals, during which the world seemed wrapped in universal sleep. The wood-pigeons nestled among the foliage; the jackals crouched in their dens; the sheep shut up in the fold; the stray dogs curled up at the cross-ways of the roads: all that gave animation to the day or to the twilight hour, was silent now in sleep. The owl itself, dazzled by this great light, sought the shadow of the sepulchres where the sound of its hooting was deadened. Now, as at the moment when the Redeemer came into the world, all seemed hushed in silent expectation of the salvation which was about to descend from Heaven. And truly it had never been so near, and He who was bringing it, might say to the world, quite as well as to His drowsy disciples: "Sleep ye now, and take your rest; behold the hour is at hand." [1]

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 45.

It was also the hour of Satan, who, before bending beneath the might of his conqueror, was about to exhaust against Him all the efforts of his rage. Like the serpent who creeps noiselessly through the grass,[1] he advanced, darting at his victim looks full of hate, thrusting, beforehand, his venomous fangs into His breast, and stifling Him in his folds. The fool thought to surprise his adversary, and did not perceive that the Master as yet scorned to tread on his head. He had forgotten the divine words which conceded to him the right to attempt to bite the heel under which he should be crushed.[2]

"Rise, let us go: behold he is at hand that will betray me."[3] It was in these words that Jesus made known to the disciples the approach of the traitor, that Judas of Kerioth, whose name the Gospel should have suppressed, in place of telling us also the country whence he came.[4]

He was leading an escort placed at his disposal by the Chief Priests and the Ancients. It was a regular mob,[5] according to the scornful expression of the Synoptists, composed partly of the ordinary guardians of the Temple who were in the pay of the High Priest, and partly of bullies hired by the Sanhedrim.

The Gospel seems to wish to leave the Roman cohort stationed in the Antonia and the Palace of the Upper City, completely out of the affair, as if it feared to cast a stain on the military honor, that

[1] APOC. xii. 9. "The old serpent who is called the devil."

[2] GEN. iii. 15. "She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."

[3] MATTHEW xxvi. 46.

[4] SAINT JOHN CHRYSOST., "*Homilia de proditione Judæ.*" "Quid mihi ejus patriam dicis? Utinam ipsum quoque nescire licuisset."

[5] MATTHEW xxvi. 47. "With him a great multitude." Compare MARK xiv. 43, and LUKE xxii. 47. "A drunken gang," says DUPIN, *Jésus devant Caïphe et Pilate*, p. 42.

highest form of virtue in communities whose glory is departing.[1]

It is surprising that the greater number of modern historians should be mistaken on this point, when the good sense alone of Catherine Emmerich, an uneducated woman, enabled her to divine the truth, which, however, is very evident in the Gospel narrative.

To reflect on the expressions used by the sacred writers when they are narrating Pilate's first interview with Our Lord,[2] suffices to show that the Procurator was not conversant with the affair brought before his tribunal.[3] All that can be maintained is that he had a general idea of it from a brief communication made to him at the last moment. In fact, it is evident that the Jews would not at all desire his premature interference which would have been the result of a request for soldiers to apprehend Jesus. Such a request would have led him to think that the matter was within his immediate jurisdiction, and consequently to deal with it at once, and so involve the whole affair in difficulties from which there would be no longer any escape. The Priests and the Ancients only wanted to delay referring the matter to him until the moment arrived, when, willingly or not, he should pronounce sentence according to their wishes,[4] namely, after a first trial, which they

[1] *Douloureuse Passion*, c. vi. (vol. iii. *Révelations*, 239); STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 105 and 405; DUPIN (*Jésus devant Caïphe et Pilate*, p. 42–43) says, "If some Roman soldiers were to be found among the hurly-burly, they were there from curiosity, and not because they were legally summoned."

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 11, and following; LUKE xxiii. 1, and following; JOHN xviii. and following. Compare BONNETTY, *Documents historiques sur la religion des Romains*, vol. iv. p. 941.

[3] This is DUPIN'S opinion, work quoted, p. 43.

[4] LUKE xxiii. 2. "We have found this man perverting our nation." JOHN xviii. 30. "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee."

would conduct themselves. But in the present instance, it would never do to ask his co-operation, and so incur the risk of placing the whole affair in his hands. The better plan was to use the means legally at their disposal, and to affect the arrest in the usual manner, and by the agents usually employed for these measures.

To suppose that the request for an escort was addressed to the tribune in command,[1] does not in the least solve the difficulty. That officer, if he suspected the gravity of the concession, would not grant it without advice, especially when it is admitted that he intended to direct the expedition himself. Because it was the Procurator who commanded the military forces of his government, and he would be obliged to maintain his prerogative when he was in Jerusalem, where he was almost in an enemy's country, with the possibility of sedition ever in the distance. On the other hand, if the tribune had seen nothing extraordinary in the proposed arrest, he would have been justly astonished that his intervention should be required, and he would surely have replied as Pilate did, on the third day, "You have a guard; make use of it."[2]

Besides, a remark here suggests itself. As Judas left the Cenacle at the end of the repast, that is to say, pretty late in the evening, he would have found it difficult to give the Ancients the signal of departure in time for them to solicit an escort from the Procurator before the moment agreed upon for the arrest of Our Divine Lord. Thus innumerable difficulties are accumulated in order to arrive at a

[1] What might be concluded at first sight, from the title given by ST. JOHN (xviii. 12), to the officer who commanded the band at Gethsemani.

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 65. "You have a guard; go, guard it as you know."

very unlikely conclusion. The simplest way is to adhere to the Gospel data, from which it cannot be at all inferred that the Roman soldiers were present in the Garden of Gethsemani.

The Synoptists speak of a mob armed with short swords and with sticks, sent by the princes of the people.[1] They thus establish a kind of distinction between the two elements of this improvised band, the agents of the priests and those of the Sanhedrim. The reason is easily discovered.

The Sanhedrim had its police, of which the East still preserves the type unchanged. Any one who has spent a few days in Constantinople, for instance, knows the city-watch, armed with sabres and with clubs, often more to be dreaded by the peaceful inhabitants than by the real criminals. The club (the Arab *matraque*) has not changed its form; but the sabre has replaced the *kandjiar* or *yatagan* of the ancients, the "short sword"[2] spoken of by the Gospel, very different to the sword used by the legions.[3] Police of this kind existed in Jerusalem, from the time of Solomon, and the Canticle shows them to us going about the city at night, and even in those days molesting inoffensive[4] individuals. They even exercised their functions in the country, and, probably, it was with them that Saint Paul was journeying to Damascus with powers to

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 47. "A great multitude with swords and clubs sent from the chief priests and the ancients of the people." Compare MARK xiv. 43; LUKE xxii. 52.

[2] Μάχαιρα, *Machæra*, a curved one-edged blade. (RICHAR, see "Machæra.")

[3] *Gladius*, a rather long two-edged sword with a sharp point (see RICHAR, "Gladius").

[4] CANTIC. iii. 3. "The watchmen who kept the city found me." v. 7. "The keepers that go about the city, found me; they struck me: and wounded me: the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me."

arrest on the way those who were obnoxious to the Sanhedrim.[1]

The Temple had a special guard under the leadership of a chief who bore, according to Josephus and Saint Luke, the title of general,[2] with lieutenants, to whom the Gospel makes allusion.[3] Its organization was altogether military, and as we know, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the Roman system prevailed in the armies recently formed in Palestine under the Asmoneans and the first Herod,[4] there was nothing astonishing in finding that they used the same titles as were employed in Rome.

Saint John designates by the name of cohort the band sent to Gethsemani, and gives as its leader a tribune,[5] this has caused Sepp's error and so many others. In fact, it has been maintained that the word "cohort," in the New Testament, was used solely to designate Roman soldiers commanded by a tribune.[6] But it should be noticed that regular troops are rarely brought on the scene in the New Testament; and these are always Roman troops. The words "cohort" and "tribune" constantly occur in the Old Testament, and are used to designate bands and offices differing slightly from those of the Romans, though very similar in many respects.

To take only one or two examples, Saul had "tribunes" in his army,[7] and Judas Maccabeus arranged

[1] ACTS APOSTLES ix. 7. "The men who went in company with him."

[2] "Στρατηγός," translated by "magistratus" in the Vulgate (ACT iv. 1).

[3] LUKE xxii. 4. "Judas . . . discoursed with . . . and the magistrates."

[4] JOSEPHUS, *Bell. Jud.*, I. xii. 3, etc.

[5] JOHN xviii. 12. "Then the band and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews, took Jesus."

[6] LE CAMUS, iii. 272, note 1.

[7] I KINGS xvii. 18. "And carry these ten little cheeses to the tribune."

his army in cohorts.[1] The strength of the Roman cohort was five hundred men, and this body could scarcely be set in motion for the apprehension of Our Lord, noiselessly, particularly when we add to it the band sent by the Ancients and Pharisees.

The very most that can be admitted is that this cohort was a number, more or less considerable, of men with military equipments and commanded by one of the lieutenants of the Captain of the Temple to whom the title of Tribune was due, as he belonged to the second order of military rank.[2]

We may, therefore, set aside the garrison of the Antonia, of whose unfortunate interference later we shall very shortly have proof; and let us now return to the mob sent by the Sanhedrists in search of Our Lord.

The police agents were to lead the Prisoner away, protected by the guards on whom more especially devolved the duty of opposing all resistance on the part of the disciples, or even of the Galileans who might be attracted to the spot by the noise, the clashing of arms, and the glare of the lights. In fact, they had taken measures to light up the recesses of the woods and the caves in which Our Lord might find a refuge, and which would be rendered still more obscure by the brilliant light outside.

Judas[3] is credited with the adoption of this precau-

[1] II Macc. xii. 20. "Cumque cohors (*σπείρα*) Judæ prima apparuisset."

[2] The commander-in-chief of the Guard of the Temple bears, in the Acts (v. 26) the title of *στρατηγός*, or general. His lieutenants, who were comprised under the appellation "*magistratus Templi*," naturally therefore bore the secondary title of "tribunes." Saint Luke (xxii. 52) designates them also by the word "*στρατηγούς*" which was applied to the six tribunes of the Roman legion who took, in turn, the supreme command (see Richar, *Dictionnaire*, Στρατηγός, 2, *et Tribunus*, 3).

[3] John xviii. 3. "Judas . . . cometh thither with lanterns, and torches and weapons."

tion, very natural in such circumstances, but which denotes frightful cold-bloodedness on the part of him who suggested it.

The wretched man had taken another precaution still more odious: fearing that Jesus might not be easily recognized in the darkness amongst His disciples, he said to the agents of the Sanhedrim, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He."[1] And as if he distrusted the result of his artifice, he added, "Lay hold on Him, and lead Him away carefully."[2]

Judas and the police-officers probably left the city by one of the gates leading into the valley of Hinnom, so as to avoid being noticed, which would have brought the crowd on their track. Ascending the course of the Cedron by its right bank, they had crossed the lower bridge,[3] which brought them quite close to the entrance of Gethsemani.

Their route had thus been continuously sheltered by the heights of Siloam and by the tall trees which bordered the torrent.

Instead of the Sheep-Gate, situated at the north-east angle of the sacred enclosure, the guards of the Temple must have chosen that which faced the opposite angle and rejoined the road to the Mount of Olives facing Zachary's tomb.

They would have found their way much obstructed

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 48.

[2] MARK xiv. 44. We remark here the prejudices described by several of the Fathers (particularly by Theophylactus and Saint John Chrysostom) which disposed the Jews to regard Jesus as being a supernatural being whom, under certain circumstances, it would be impossible to seize.

[3] Which we infer from the tradition relating to the place where Judas betrayed his Master. It may be also concluded that the Jews did not come from the Temple by the Sheep-Gate, because they had crossed the Cedron by the Upper Bridge near the Tomb of the Blessed Virgin. Finally, it may be inferred that the crowd described by the Gospel did not come out through the *Antonia*, because it must have followed this last road to reach Gethsemani.

by the Paschal lambs and their drivers in the neighborhood of the pool in which the victims were purified before they were brought into the Porch. There, also, their passage would have created the disturbance which they feared above all things. The other route, therefore, was preferable, and the junction of the two bands must have taken place in the neighborhood of Absalom's tomb.

Be that as it may, their guide soon brought them to the garden-gate, which he opened without any hesitation, no doubt not expecting to find himself at once face to face with his Master. He had not reckoned on the clear-sightedness of Him whom he hoped to surprise. Our Lord, preceding the three disciples, who had witnessed His Agony, at that very moment reached the spot where He had left the eight, namely, at the entrance to the garden.[1] Surprise caused the traitor to become confused, and precipitated[2] his meeting with His Master.[3] He stepped forward quickly, and perhaps, without knowing very well what he was doing, he took Jesus by the hands, as was the custom; then he kissed Him, saying, "Hail, Rabbi!"[4]

His voice trembled, and he stammered, "Rabbi, Rabbi,"[5] as he tried to repeat the hateful salutation. According to the remark of Matthew and of Mark, he seemed as if he were unable to free himself from the embrace.[6] "Poor friend," whispered Jesus in his ear,

[1] JOHN xviii. 4. "Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forward."

[2] MARK xiv. 45. "And when he was come, immediately going up to him." Compare FARRAR, *Life of Christ*, p. 398.

[3] The Orientals have five different salutations: the most solemn and most affectionate consists in kissing the friend's face and taking his hands. This salutation is called in Arabic "Gullay-Milna."

[4] MATTHEW xxvi. 49. "And forthwith, coming (*προσελθών*) to Jesus, he said: Hail, Rabbi! And he kissed him."

[5] MARK xiv. 45. "Λέγει: Ῥαββί, ῥαββί!"

[6] "Κατεφίλησεν αὐτόν."

"why art thou come?"[1] And then putting him away gently, as if the better to see his face, "Judas, dost thou betray the son of man with a kiss?"[2]

Did the ineffable sweetness of the Divine Voice awaken remorse in the soul of the unhappy man? No one can answer. Let us be satisfied with remarking the silence of the well-beloved disciple who has not willed to recall in his Gospel the memory of that fatal kiss,[3] and, like him, let us pass on quickly without casting the stone at the traitor whom we have too often imitated.

Meanwhile, Peter, James, and John had come forward and, vaguely understanding that something strange was taking place, they avoided Judas, at the same time calling the eight who had taken shelter in the neighboring house. The agents of the Sanhedrim, on their side, were preparing to penetrate into the garden, but yet were held back by the uncertainty of the danger which they incurred in so doing. Calm in the midst of this disturbance, and majestic as a king who is presenting himself to the homage of the crowd, Jesus crossed the threshold and walked to meet them with uplifted head and flashing glance.

"Whom seek ye?" He asked in a voice whose tones vibrated.

"Jesus of Nazareth!"

"I am he!"

Scarcely had the answer reached their ear than they were thrown to the ground,[4] as if swept away by the breath which breaketh the cedars and

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 50. "Friend (Ἑταῖρε), whereto art thou come?"

[2] LUKE xxii. 48.

[3] "Per osculum adimplevit homocidium." *Office for Holy Thursday*, vi. versicle.

[4] JOHN xviii. 4. "Jesus . . . went forward (word for word, exivit, ἐξῆλθεν) and said to them, Whom seek ye? They answered

shaketh the desert.[1] Judas, who had joined them,[2] was dragged down in their fall. For an instant they were overwhelmed; then they rose up, stricken with fear and with surprise.[3] Judas was silent, and, no doubt, tried to disappear. Our Lord advanced another step, and repeated His question.

"Whom seek ye?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied in an unsteady voice, so terrible did the Master appear to them in the full light into which He had just come.[4]

Their lanterns must have been extinguished at the moment of their fall, and the moon was flooding the place where Jesus stood with a light so brilliant as to cause the darkness behind Him to seem more intense.[5] He was surrounded with rays of light as if with a mantle of glory, and those who had seen the vision on Tabor might ask themselves if it had been more splendid.

"I have told you that I am He," He affirmed, slowly, "if, therefore, you seek Me, let these go their way."[6] And He pointed to His disciples, who were standing in a group at a little distance, some of them frightened, the others filled with zeal and indignation, but all convinced that their lives and that of their

him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them: I am he. As soon therefore as he had said to them: I am he; they went backward and fell to the ground."

[1] PSALM xxviii. 5. "The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars, and shaketh the desert."

[2] JOHN xviii 5. "And Judas also . . . stood with them."

[3] SAINT CYRIL, *Cateches.* "Invasit eos illico timor, et prostrati, et exanimes jacuere solo."

[4] SAINT CYRIL, *Cateches.* "Qui se discipulis pavidum, coram persecutoribus terribilem se exhibuit."

[5] FARRAR, *Life of Christ*, p. 399.

[6] JOHN xviii. 7–8. "Again, therefore, he asked them: Whom seek ye? And they said: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered: I have told you that I am he; if therefore, you seek me, let these go their way."

Master were at stake. They forgot that He had arranged that they were to be left out of the affair this time, in accordance with the promise which He made when He said, "Those whom thou gavest Me, I have kept, O my Father; and none of them hath perished."[1]

Some of the Sanhedrists had accompanied their agents; but as they probably remained behind, they had not been overthrown, and when they heard the tumult at the garden-gate, they concluded that there was a struggle between the disciples and the assailants.[2] Therefore, they went forward to animate the courage of their own party, and succeeded in restoring to them some presence of mind. Jesus was soon surrounded; and they dared to lay hands on Him.[3] This was the signal for a violent protest on the part of the Apostles, "Lord," cried out those amongst them who had gone armed to the Cenacle, "shall we strike?"[4]

Without waiting for an answer, Peter flung himself into the mêlée, sword in hand, and, aiming a random blow, cut off the right ear of one of the High Priest's servants, a certain Malek or Malchus whom the Gospel has honored by preserving his name.[5] This

[1] JOHN xvii. 12. "Those whom thou gavest me have I kept, and none of them is lost." Compare Id. xviii. 9.

[2] Compare CATHERINE EMMERICH, *Douloureuse Passion* c. vi.

[3] MATTHEW xxvi. 50. "Then they came up, and laid hands on Jesus."

[4] LUKE xxii. 49. "And they that were about him, seeing what would follow, said to him: 'Lord, shall we strike with the sword?'" The Jews, especially pilgrims and travellers, usually carried arms, therefore no one need be surprised at seeing a sword in Saint Peter's hands. The other sword, which was taken to the Cenacle (LUKE xxii. 38), was in the girdle of Saint Simon the Zealot.

[5] JOHN xviii. 10. "Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it; and struck the servant of the high-priest; and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus." Saint Matthew (xxvi. 51) points out to us very clearly the curved form of the sword and

courageous act could not have much effect. What could one or two men do against an angry crowd? However, it caused a recoil, and the Master was left free for a moment. He profited by it to calm His disciples' anger.

"Let them alone," He said, "put up again thy sword into its place. For all that take the sword shall perish with the sword. The Chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and He will give Me presently more than twelve legions of angels?"[1]

They were but twelve men, and if twelve legions of angels took their place, He would have had but little difficulty in repulsing — for He disdained to annihilate them — the Sanhedrists and their hired assassins. But in that case, how could the words of the Scripture be fulfilled, according to which all that was taking place before their eyes must happen?[2]

Then stooping down to Malchus, who was lying, bleeding, in the dust, He touched his wounded ear, and healed the wound; whilst Peter, gloomy and threatening of visage, still kept at a distance the archers whose retreat had brought the chief priests to the front. Jesus saw them, and apostrophized them in the following scornful words:

"You are come out as it were to a robber with swords and clubs to apprehend me. I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you laid not hands on Me.[3] But this is your hour and the power of dark-

its size, which distinguish it from the *kandjiar*. "And behold, one of them, stretching forth his hand, drew out his sword." "Ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα, ἀπέσπασε τὴν μάχαιραν αὐτοῦ." The precision of the Gospel often excites our admiration.

[1] LUKE xxii. 51; MATTHEW xxvi. 52; JOHN xviii. 11. "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

[2] MATTHEW xxvi. 54. "How then shall the Scripture be fulfilled that so it must be done?" Compare ISAI. liii. 7.

[3] MATTHEW xxvi. 55.

ness."[1] He wished thus to show with what free will He submitted to the ordeal.

Most undoubtedly they could have arrested Him in the Temple, and the will was not wanting to them, but it was not His hour,[2] nor, consequently, that of the powers of darkness. It would come when He called it, and nothing could hasten its coming. Even the treachery of Judas, which He had foretold, could have no influence over the march of events, and the treacherous kiss could not point Him out to sinners. Hands would be laid upon Him at the precise moment in which it suited Him to permit it, after He had overthrown, with one word and one glance, the soldiers sent against Him. He was ready now; they must be so likewise. Their hour had struck; they must begin without delay to make use of it, driven, as they were, at the point of the sword by the Divine Power whose designs they seemed to be thwarting.

They had shut their eyes in order not to see. They had stopped their ears, like the deaf asp, to the voice of the charmers,[3] and they had rushed to the crime, not suspecting that they were on the road to death.

They had, therefore, the full pride of their triumph, even to supposing that the fall of their agents was the last manifestation of an exhausted power. The Master's protest was received with a scornful smile. At the tribune's order, the soldiery surrounded Jesus, and the servants bound His hands, whilst He thought of the fulfilment of the prophecies, forgotten by the very people for whom the Divine Spirit had above all intended them.[4]

[1] LUKE xxii. 53.

[2] JOHN vii. 30. "His hour was not yet come."

[3] PSALM lvii. 5. "Their madness, . . . like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears."

[4] MARK xiv. 49, "That the Scriptures may be fulfilled."

Isaiah, had he not foretold that they would number Him among the wicked?[1] Had not Jeremiah predicted that He would be the captive of sinners?[2]

The Chief-Priests and the Doctors of the Law had but little thought, at that moment, for prophecies. What concerned them was the consummation of their vengeance, so fortunately begun. Ah! now they might confess that they had not expected to get the better of the Galilæan quite so easily. Not that they themselves feared Him personally, having imposed it on themselves as an obligation not to regard Him as a prophet, and having but a faint belief in that devil by whom they said He was favored. But they thought Him capable of calling to His aid His compatriots who had come to Jerusalem for the Pasch, and those fellows — wrong-headed and strong of arm — might have given them trouble. He had lost confidence in His own prestige, or, at the last moment, He had doubted the success of an insurrection. The recollection of the Galilæan[3] had discouraged Him so far as to prevent an attempt, impotent indeed, but which would have given great trouble to suppress. At the present hour, all was at an end. Only one anxiety now remained: namely, as to the Procurator's opinion, which would be necessary for the completion of the work of deliverance. But this did not alarm them; their cleverness had got them out of quite as difficult positions, and in the end Roman resistance would bow before Jewish obstinacy.

Whilst they thus indulged in their thoughts, the Apostles, who were forgotten, plunged into the gar-

[1] ISAI. liii. 12. "He hath delivered his soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked."

[2] LAM. iv. 20. "Christ the Lord is taken in our sins."

[3] ACTS APOSTLES v. 37. "Judas, of Galilee, . . . drew away the people after him . . . and as many as consented to him were dispersed."

den again, or fled by the road to Bethany.[1] No one thought of following them, in the hurry to regain Jerusalem, and to place their prisoner in safety against any attempt at rescue. The gloomy procession hurried its march, following the route by which it came, with still greater precautions, so much did they dread any untoward incident. They felt the gaze of the sentinels on the Antonia, attracted by this movement of lights in the valley, fixed upon them. Would not the centurion of the guard call the tribune's attention to them, and provoke interference which would save the victim by bringing them under Cæsar's jurisdiction.

Even the road seemed unsafe to them, with its defiles, whence might issue forth the partisans of the Nazarene who had come from the city or descended from the heights. A very young man, attracted by the noise, followed them; he was covered with a linen sheet,[2] the whiteness of which soon betrayed his presence.[3] This apparition frightened them; but the flight of the youth, stripped of his mantle, caused them still greater anxiety. Was he going to rouse the pilgrims encamped on the Mount? How slowly their Prisoner seemed to walk!

At last they turned the point of Tophet, and began the ascent of Sion. They could breathe freely now, far away from the gaze of the indiscreet, certain that there was no longer fear of being stopped on the way to the High Priest's Palace where Jesus was to be

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 56. "Then the disciples, all leaving him, fled."

[2] The sinaôn, a garment worn by the Jews of that period.

[3] MARK xiv. 51. "And a certain young man followed him, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and they laid hold on him. But he, casting off the linen cloth, fled from them naked." It has been supposed that this young man was Mark himself. Saint Gregory (xiv. Moral.) thinks that there is question of Saint John. Theophylact. (*In Marcum* xiv. 9) points out Saint James the Less.

lodged whilst waiting the solemn trial. For they were scrupulous. As the Sanhedrim did not sit at night, they could not proceed with the examination and the sentence until daybreak.

They did indeed wish to shed blood, but it should be done with the forms which legalized the shedding. They were indeed the sons of those who slew the prophets, and then ordered that their tombs should be adorned and whitened.[1]

It might have been half-past one in the morning when the Divine Prisoner re-entered Sion, after having crossed the fragrant gardens which covered the slope of the hill.[2] The calm of that luminous and perfume-breathing night rendered the desolation of the Son of Man still more sensible. Nothing seemed affected by His sorrow. He was indeed alone, and the words of the Prophet were entirely fulfilled, "I looked about, and there was none to help; I sought, and there was none to give aid." He could, it is true, complete the application of the prophetic sentence, "And my own arm hath saved for me . . . and I have brought down their strength to the earth."[3]

[1] LUKE xi. 47. "Woe to you who build the monuments of the prophets; and your fathers who killed them."

[2] SAINT JEROME, *Comment. in Jeremiam*, Book ii. c. vii. v. 31.

[3] ISAI. lxiii. 5.

THIRD BOOK

MOUNT SION

CHAPTER I

ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS — THE SADDUCEES AND THE PHARISEES

"Jesus said to them: Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." — MATTHEW xvi. 6.

"Let them alone; they are blind, and leaders of the blind." — MATTHEW xv. 14.

BEFORE entering with the Divine Master into the High Priest's dwelling, where He must submit to a first examination, and where Pilate's judgment will be pronounced upon Him, in anticipation, it will be of interest to investigate the character of the men before whom He is about to appear and to find out the verdict of history with regard to the tribunal which will sentence Him to death.

The personage whom the Gospel brings first on the scene, with the evident intention of attracting all eyes to him, is Annas,[1] with whose name Saint Luke couples that of Caiaphas, when he speaks of the first preaching of Saint John the Baptist.[2] At that time fifteen years had already elapsed since the Procurator, Valerius Gratus, had deprived him of the High Priesthood, and ten years since that office had been

[1] *Hannan-ben-Scheth* in Hebrew. In Greek, Ἅννας, of which Josephus makes Ἄνανος.

[2] LUKE iii. 2. "Under the high priests, Annas and Caiaphas."

entrusted to Joseph-Caiaphas, the son-in-law of the deposed Pontiff.

But the insult offered to him had deprived him of none of the prestige which he enjoyed among the Jews, because in that long succession of priests called to the great Office of Sacrificer, during half a century, he alone had clearly a legitimate right.

After the death of Aristobulus, who was the last of the Asmoneans assassinated by Herod, the throne of Aaron had been occupied by titulars elevated and deposed according to the royal caprice. Ananel consented to resume the post which he had vacated, to make way for the unfortunate Aristobulus. Herod's passion for the second Mariamne had placed the tiara on the brow of Simon, son of Boethus, a hitherto obscure and unknown priest. Matthias succeeded him, and was soon supplanted by Joazar, Simon's son, one of the most slandered characters in Jewish History. Archelaus deposed him to elevate his brother, Eleazar, who was degraded at the end of several months, in favor of Josue-ben-Sie, another favorite with quite as little to recommend him.

Joazar reascended the sacerdotal throne on the death of the latter, and was again deposed by Sulpicius Quirinius, Governor of Syria, under whose administration the Procurator Coponius settled to Rome's advantage the succession of Archelaus.

It was then that Annas was elected, as it seems, freely, and regularly. He was the son of Seth,[1] the head of one of the most powerful sacerdotal families, and reputed as the most fortunate man of his time, according to Josephus.[2] He retained power for seven years under the Procurators Coponius, Ambivius, and

[1] "He was then thirty-seven years of age." (JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* XVIII. ii. 1).

[2] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* XV. iii. 1.

Rufus. The arrival of Valerius Gratus was the signal for his downfall. Ishmael-ben-Fabi was chosen to succeed him, and contrived to retain his office for nine years.

According to the Rabbinical statements, the last named was the most effeminate man of his time.[1] He was replaced by Simon-ben-Kamith, and lastly by Joseph Caiaphas, the brother-in-law of Eleazar, and consequently, son-in-law of that fortunate Annas who always ruled behind the deputies whom the Procurator's avarice, or the policy of Tiberius, gave him.

At the time to which we have now come, five of these high priests sat with him on the benches of the Sanhedrim; one of them was his son, another his son-in-law, and we can imagine that all of them were his creatures. But, as we have already said, he was the only one who had the advantage of being lawfully elected; and he seems to have retained to the end of his life the character of a legitimate pontiff, in the eyes of true believers. His son Eleazar is unknown to us; but his son-in-law appears as a mere supernumary in the drama, of which, according to the Evangelists, Annas is the moving spirit.

In proportion as Caiaphas was ignorant and weak, his father-in-law was intelligent, audacious, and versed in the knowledge of the Law. Josephus has drawn his portrait for us, a faithful one, no doubt, but not very flattering to the original.

"Annas," he tells, "saw the esteem and good-will of all and the honor with which it pleased his fellow-citizens to surround him increase more and more every day. There was no one so skilful in the art of augmenting his wealth; and thus he was able, by means of magnificent gifts, to propitiate the governor,

[1] TALMUD, tract *Pesachim*, fol. 57, verso; tract *Yoma*, fol. 9, verso; p. 35, recto.

and even the High Priest Joshua, whose favor he cultivated assiduously. He had in his service vagabonds who were ready to join with all the worst characters in the city, attacking the priests, even in the Porch of the Temple, to rob them of the offerings which they had received, and to beat them unmercifully if they resisted. The Pontiffs, it is true," adds the narrator in a tone of melancholy, "did the same, without any one daring to protest. Hence, it resulted that the priests who were formerly in comfort, now lived in a state of embarrassment, bordering on distress."[1]

When, at the age of thirty-seven, he took the place of that Joshua upon whom he had fawned so well, he understood how to unite to his natural audacity and obstinacy a marvellous pliancy with regard to the Romans. In the affair of the Galilæan, of which we shall soon have occasion to speak, he declared himself openly in favor of submission to Cæsar, at the same time dealing gently with the prejudices which disposed the people to listen to suggestions of revolt. His interference had not all the desired success; but it was none the less useful, and Quirinius did not forget the service.[2] To his knowledge of the Law, such as the additions of the Rabbinical tradition had made it, he joined the scepticism of the Sadducees, to whom his education and his tastes inclined him. Cunning, unscrupulous, knowing how to wait, he had all the qualities necessary to please some, and to frighten others; to purchase those who were to be sold, and to suppress those from whom he could derive no advantage. Such men everywhere come to the front, sometimes maintain themselves there for long years, and drag their generation with

[1] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* XX. ix. 2.
[2] Id. ibid. XVIII. i. 6.

them into crime, if Providence does not launch in time the thunder-bolt which sends them into hell.

For sixteen years Caiaphas had worn the tiara, purchased, it was said, at a great cost from that same Valerius Gratus who had deposed his father-in-law, and, later on, his brother-in-law, Eleazar-ben-Annah. He was a man of little judgment or knowledge,[1] violent and brutal, as is usual with those of limited intelligence, haughty, notwithstanding, and infatuated with his own dignity.[2] There is nothing to prove that he was naturally bad, and the Gospel seems even to insinuate the contrary, in the account of the council held against Jesus, on the fourteenth of February, after the raising of Lazarus.[3] He was rather, it seems, one of those men who allow themselves to be led away by every bad suggestion, and, at the same time, are given to the vanity so frequent amongst those who are in authority, of taking the responsibility for the evil suggested or even urged by their subordinates.

This is the reason why, as Sepp remarks,[4] "Caiaphas was only a docile instrument in the hands of Annas, that cunning diplomatist who found means to interfere in everything and to direct all matters by his influence." Renan's opinion of him is the same: "Annas, in reality, was the chief of the sacerdotal party. Caiaphas did nothing without him. People were accustomed to associate their names together, and that of Annas was always placed first. In fact, we can understand how, under this system of yearly election to the sacerdotal office, which was also transferred in turn according to the caprice of

[1] Sepp, *Vie de Jésus-Christ*, ii. 326.

[2] Matthew xxvi. 62, and following; Mark xiv. 60, and following, etc.

[3] John xi. 51.

[4] Sepp, *Vie de Jésus-Christ*, ii. 326.

the Procurators, an old pontiff who had preserved the secret of the traditions, and had seen many younger than himself succeed one another, and who had retained sufficient influence to have the power delegated to people who, according to family were subordinate to him, must have been a very important personage."[1] Thus the responsibility for the Deicide must especially fall on Annas, "the principal actor in that terrible drama," "the real author of that judicial murder which was about to be accomplished."[2] But it was agreed to by Caiaphas and the whole "sacerdotal family," as they named the sons of the deposed Pontiff. Eleazar, the other deposed high priest, and his brothers, Jonathas, Theophilus, Matthias, all raised later to the supreme office of sacrifice, took their share of the crime without any possible excuse. "The character of this family was haughty, daring, cruel; they had that kind of scornful and cunning wickedness which characterises Jewish politics. Hence it is on Annas and those belonging to him that the whole responsibility must rest for all that follows."[3]

To complete the picture of this accursed race, let us add that they were scarcely of Jewish origin, if Farrar is to be believed; for, according to him, they were brought from Alexandria by the first Herod, together with the Boethusians, the Kamits, and the Phabis, servitors ready to do everything for the new King of the Jews.[4] Anxiety for their fortune and their power was their sole preoccupation. Everything had gone well with them from this twofold point of view. At the time of the Passion, the captain of the Temple was

[1] RENAN, *Vie de Jésus*, xxii. p. 366.
[2] Id. Ibid. xxii. p. 367, xxiv. p. 396.
[3] Id. Ibid. xxii. p. 366.
[4] FARRAR, *Life of Christ*, p. 405.

probably one of the sons of Annas, who thus held in check the tribune of the tower of Antonia. Their revenues were increased by the traffic in the offerings intended for the Temple, which were sold in their bazaars, *chanujôth*, established under the cedars of the Mount of Olives. The stalls of the merchants and the tables of the money-changers which Our Lord had driven from the Porch of Israel, were probably placed there with their consent; and the *Talmud*, prompted by the indignation of the grandson of Hillel, applies to them that same term, race of vipers, with which Jesus had stigmatized them.[1]

Such were the chiefs of the "sacerdotal race," that is to say, of the Levites[2] called to the great offices of the Temple, and, in virtue of these, to the labors of the Sanhedrim, for it is necessary to mark well, that here we are in presence of the chief priests only, and not of the inferior priests whom Josephus has shown us ill-treated and reduced to misery by their pontiffs. Amongst the Levites, all were not raised to the priesthood; a certain number of families were chosen for this function, and each had a chief who represented them near the High Priest. In this aristocracy, the first place belonged to those who had filled the sovereign office of Sacrificer and who remained by law members of the Sanhedrim. After them, came the simple heads of the sacerdotal family, not very numerous outside the relatives of the High Priests, who were careful to provide first for their own sons and those allied to them.[3]

[1] MATTHEW xii. 34. "O generation of vipers." Compare FARRAR; and STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 407.

[2] Or members of the tribe of Levi. For the redivision of the ecclesiastical functions amongst them, see the four first chapters of *Numbers;* and for the division of the sacerdotal families into twenty-four classes, see the 1st Book of KINGS xxiv. 7–19.

[3] DEREMBOURG, *Essai sur l'histoire et la géographie de la Palestine*, p. 232. Compare Abbé LÉMANN, *Valeur de l'assemblée*, etc. p. 23.

What a strange thing! These official representatives of the True Doctrine did not believe in it, and lived accordingly. Nearly the whole priesthood of Israel was infected with Sadduceeism or materialism, hypocritically disguised under the appearance of a liberal interpretation of the Law.

The Sadducees owed their name to Sadoc,[1] who lived two hundred and forty years before Jesus Christ. They were recruited amongst the great families of the priesthood and of the people, that is to say, amongst those who traditionally held the power in their hands, especially since the Asmoneans had succeeded to the throne.

The relations of Judas Maccabeus with the Romans,[2] the intercourse, more and more frequent, between his successor and Asia Minor and Greece, and the relations which the Herods naturally kept up with Egypt, had caused an invasion of foreign ideas and manners against which the Princes and great ones of Israel made but a poor defence. Under pretext of acting in the public or private interests of others, they accepted compromises detestable in the eyes of the Puritans, and for which even more indulgent consciences were right in reproaching them. By degrees, the corruption infected them to such an extent as to render them apostates in mind and heart, if not yet such outwardly, though, indeed, there was little wanting to them in the latter respect, to judge by their eagerness to imitate the Gentiles, as far as it was possible. It was easy to see that if they had not feared the people's resentment, they would have acted as the Idumeans did at Herod's

[1] Others say that the name Sadducee comes from *Sedacha*, "Justice," which resulted from their acceptation of the written Law only. See Ed. Montet, *Essai sur les origines des partis Sadducéen et Pharisien*.

[2] I Maccabees viii. 1, and following, xii. 16, etc.

court, and, without any scruple, joined the Baals of Phœnicia to the gods of Rome and to Jehovah of Israel.

Hence the name of Sadducee had become for the people synonymous with scepticism and with loose living.

Maintaining, as they did, that belief in Providence, the immortality of the soul, and a future life were not expressly taught in the Scripture, they jeeringly rejected these, as the Gospel has recorded.[1] They paid little heed to the observances so dear to the Pharisees; they loved luxury and feasting, and considered themselves quite at liberty to procure these things by violent means; for they had not that fear of the sword, which, it is said, distinguished their antagonists, and they did not retreat before superior numbers. Their sentences were always more severe than those of the Pharisees, which is not surprising, for in the opinion of Montesquieu, effeminate manners are always closely allied to ferocious manners.[2] The duration of the present life and its enjoyments alone occupied their thoughts; but, all the same, there was a Providence whose business it was to reward the daring and the cleverness which they adorned with the title of virtues. We have already seen by the acts of the chief priests that they were infected with Sadduceeism. Let us add, to give an idea of them, that, in general, they were regarded as being ignorant of the Law, and were laughed at by the Scribes and Pharisees. Under Alexander Jannæus, they had approved of the Prince's marriage with Salome, his brother's widow, contrary to the ordinances of the Pentateuch,[3] which

[1] LUKE xx. 29, and follow. Compare *Aboth* of Rabbi Nathan, v.

[2] The people said of them: "They are not dayané-guezeroth (supreme judges), but dayané-guezeloth (judges of robbery). Compare STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 269.

[3] LEVITICUS xviii. 16, xxi. 14.

afterwards brought upon them a public humiliation at the hands of the Scribe Simeon-ben-Schata.

Under the reign of Antipas, they were equally as accommodating in the affair of the so-called marriage which he had contracted with Herodias. The Pharisees, it is true, did not openly scoff at them, for fear of compromising themselves; but they none the less despised that deceitful and debauched [1] crew whose excesses dishonored Israel and provoked Jehovah.

This contempt and the popular discontent must inevitably lead to a reaction; as, in fact, actually occurred, — a remedy worse than the disease, necessary as it might seem. It is the misfortune of the human intellect, when left to its own resources, to go from one extreme to the other, especially in matters of religion and morals. It is vain to seek for light unless God has been asked to prepare the way for it and to insure its radiation in souls. As the Gospel tells us: *the world cannot maintain itself in the truth, because the truth is not in it* — but *in Him who is the light of the world*.[2]

Although the head of the sect, Hillel, had appeared on the scene a long time after Sadoc (one hundred and twenty-four years only before Jesus Christ), the Pharisaical spirit was not of recent origin. It originated quite naturally in the disorder which led to the ruin of Israel and of Juda, to the Babylonian captivity, and the life full of suffering which followed the Deliverance. At that time it was a spirit of legitimate protest against the dissoluteness of the princes and the great, too often imitated by the people, and tolerated by the priests. True, it was a sullen, surly protest, useless also, and, for that very reason, becoming more

[1] Acts Apostles xxiii. 6–10. It is a striking picture of the rivalries and hatred which divided the two parties.

[2] John viii. 12; ibid. 44.

embittered every day. At the return of the captives, it took another form. The impaired tradition gave to faith and morals somewhat of vagueness and uncertainty, which the true Israelites, the godly (Hassidim), as they called themselves, undertook to counteract. Whilst the Scribes investigated the doctrine and, under pretext of rendering it more exact, loaded it with puerile and fastidious comments, the Hassidim refined on morals, the precepts of which they swamped in an ocean of ridiculous and wearisome ordinances, but more important in their eyes than the primitive Law.[1] The growing influence of Hellenism, under the kings of Greek descent, the Asmoneans themselves, and later, the Herods, gave fresh vitality to Jewish Puritanism, and created what we call Pharisaism or the separation.[2] Joseph-ben-Joazar is regarded as having founded it, shortly before the advent of the Maccabees. He formed a party or sect which favored the movement for emancipation, led by Mattathias and Judas. Afterwards, this party held itself aloof, sulking with the Asmoneans, especially after the alliance with Rome.

Under Alexander and Hircanus II. they were by turns masters of the situation, and then reduced to silence, according to the variations of the struggle in which they had engaged against the partisans of the new ideas, namely, the Sadducees, who were the heads of the great families or princes of the priests.

A schism very quickly took place in Pharisaism. Some of the Hassidim, but little desirous, it

[1] As results from the Rabbinical teaching. Compare MAIMONIDE, Rabbi MATTATHIAS, A. WEILL, etc.

[2] From the Arabic word *Parusch*, *separated*. Others derive the name of Pharisee from the word *pharusch*, which means *commentator*. The Pharisees amongst themselves are called by the name of *Haberim*, *companions*. The other appellation was only used by the Jews who were strangers to the sect.

was said, of the dangers and fatigues of the war against Antiochus, took refuge in the deep valleys which are near the western shore of the Dead Sea, and there formed the Society of Essenians, a strange people about whom a great many flattering absurdities were formerly spread, because they were not properly known. At the present time, they rank with heretics and schismatics, and if they must have a name more in keeping with modern phraseology, that of eclectics would be quite suitable, taking into consideration, however, that they lead lives of austerity not usual amongst our free-thought enthusiasts.[1]

The Pharisees, properly so-called, believed in the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul, with some very incorrect ideas regarding Providence and eternal life. They have been suspected of fatalism and of metempsychosis, but probably wrongly so, if we believe what Josephus tells us.[2]

They accepted the law of Moses as revealed, but, at the same time, professing that God Himself could add nothing to it; this did not prevent them binding with it, in a henceforth indissoluble union, fancies which Eastern story-sellers would have rejected because of their improbability. After this fine work, there remained, so to say, nothing of the Law. By way of compensation, what was substituted for it was regarded as Divine, that is to say, was to be considered quite as binding as the revelation on Sinai. In the same way, if the Mosaic ordinances diminished more and more, in consequence of this remoulding, those of the Rabbis must suffer no diminution, under penalty

[1] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* XVIII. i. 4-5; FOUARD, *Vie de N. S. Jésus-Christ*, i. 13; LE CAMUS, *Vie de Jésus-Christ*, i. 73; LEDRAIN, *Histoire d'Israël*, ii. 225; ÉDOUARD SCHURÉ, *Les Grands Initiés*; STAPFER, *La Palestine*, etc.

[2] VIDAL, *Vie de Saint Paul*, i. p. 26, and following. These doctrines seem to have been particularly in favor among the Essenians.

of the soul's damnation and of great peril for the present life. In fact, in some cases, it was a question of the major excommunication and, consequently, of capital punishment. It was not well to laugh at these gloomy maniacs.[1] As our Divine Lord told them, they closed the door of God's House against themselves and every one else;[2] not only by imposing impracticable laws on the proselytes whom they claimed to have made,[3] but also by declaring, *a priori*, every one, outside the people of Israel, to be excluded from the Divine promises, impure, abominable, and even after their admission into the synagogue, contemptible, as being inferior.

The true believer of Islam does not look down with greater contempt on the Giaour or Gahoudi. Those who are offended at being called sons of dogs, may console themselves by reading the *Talmud* over again.

Thus they obtained for themselves the reputation of unyielding patriotism, which gained them favor amongst the Israelites of Judea, who were, besides, attracted by the minute observances which they practised. Frequent ablutions, prayers repeated in public, wide phylacteries, correct garments, austere countenances,[4] everything about them, attracted the multitude who in that country were so enamoured with doctrinal subtleties, singular practices, and majestic appearances.

If they had lost the chief places in the counsels of the nation, they retained them in those of the

[1] See *Apparatus biblicus*, iii. MAIMONIDE; A. WEILL, *Moïse et le Talmud*, etc.

[2] LUKE xi. 52. "You yourselves have not entered in, and those that were entering in, you have hindered." Compare MATTHEW xxiii. 13.

[3] MATTHEW vi. 5; xxiii. 13–15.

[4] MATTHEW xxiii. 4–7. Compare TALMUD of Jerusalem, *Sotah*, 22; TALMUD of Babylon, *Berakhoth*, ix.

family, much more important in reality and more powerful in the directing of the public mind.

Their adversaries, in the opinion of Josephus, were only able to exist by conforming to the greater number of their ways.[1] They were masters of the people, and perhaps, in spite of appearances, of the Priests and Kings as well. The Procurators took them into account. Herod Antipas, who heartily detested them, was afraid of their jeers. The High Priests endured their insolence with a forced good grace.

Pharisaism had quite recently generated another sect which it did not acknowledge, but yet for which it cherished a secret affection.[2]

In the year 762 of Rome, and the tenth of Jesus Christ, at the moment when Quirinius was laying hands on the possessions of Archelaus, a protest was raised in the name of the rights and the independence of the Jewish people.

The author of it was a certain Judas of Gamala, surnamed the Galilæan, a man of energy, who, with Sadoc, supported a party of the Judean Pharisees.

But he had been particularly successful in Galilee, where his partisans held the country, forced the towns, and pillaged the whole land. Their daring had even stained the Temple itself with blood.[3] If Origen is to be believed, they had dreamed of imposing their chief as the Messiah.[4] The enterprise had fallen to the ground, but having become more prudent, they were not less active, and were preparing to reappear on the scene, which they did thirty years later, at the moment of the supreme struggle between Rome and Judea.[5]

[1] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* XVIII. ii.
[2] VIDAL, *Vie de Saint Paul*, vol. i. p. 25.
[3] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* XVIII. i. 6; *Bell. Jud.* II. viii. 1.
[4] ORIGEN, *Homil. in Lucam*, XXV.
[5] ACTS APOSTLES v. 37. Compare JOSEPHUS, *Bell. Jud.* IV. iii. 13.

According to Wettstein, the Pharisees had a sort of hierarchy in which the Haberim of Jerusalem[1] held the first rank, which explains to us how the enemies of Jesus, when they were beaten in Galilee, had recourse to their friends in the capital, and made them go to meet the Divine Master.[2] Besides, Jerusalem being the Holy City, it seemed natural to assign to its most pious inhabitants a place of honor amongst the people of God, which certainly would not be at all repugnant to the modesty of these men, ever anxious for the first places, according to the remark of the Gospel.[3] Amongst them, even in Jerusalem, the inner side of the pavement belonged to the Scribes or Doctors of the Law, who were pre-eminently the enemies of the Sadducees. Whilst the latter would only admit the letter of the Law, the Scribes rendered to tradition the service of preserving and determining it with scholiums and commentaries, which would have been its best safeguard if they had not soon degenerated into silly and vain flights of fancy. The subtlety natural to the Eastern character had full scope, analyzing, dissecting, and pulverizing, for the vain-glory of possessing an exact knowledge of the number of words, of letters, and of accents contained in the Sacred Books, or in order to find the most varied interpretations, or even the most contradictory. It seems like a dream to read the rubbish which the Synagogue admires under the name of the *Talmud;*[4] the work of the Rabbis who

[1] Wettstein says of them, "Præcipui auctoritate atque conditione eminentes." In the Second Book of MACCABEES (vi. 18), there seems to be an allusion to this hierarchy, "Eleazar, one of the chief of the scribes," etc.

[2] MATTHEW xv. 1. "Then came to him *from Jerusalem* Scribes and Pharisees."

[3] LUKE xx. 46. "They love . . . the first chairs in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts."

[4] There is nothing more curious than the efforts of Moses Schwab,

have collected the teachings of the Scribes who were contemporaries of Jesus Christ. We may see what became of the real tradition through these manipulations in this collective commentary, this mass of spiritual debates, not only on the whole law of Moses, but on the entire code of humanity, past, present, and future, — it is the pro and con., the black and white, the yea and nay of everything and about everything.

In a word, it is a disorderly resumé, a kind of shorthand, of the religious, judicial, theological, and theosophical debates of the Jewish schools in Jerusalem, in Babylon, in all the places where the Rabbis, Doctors of the Law, were assembled. Contrary opinions jostle one another at times on the same page and neutralize one another. It is only across all these individual contradictions that a doctrine meanders which has its logic, its aims, and its ends, around which the Rabbis have raised a triple hedge, — that is, their own word, — so that it might never be injured. But this doctrine, far from being the Law of Moses, is a tradition, and, further, a strange tradition.

This doctrine which comes from Persia and India bears trace of the principles of idolatry, of inequality, of slavery, of tyranny, and of fatality. Hence it is that every time a Rabbi beats his sides in honor of the Pharisaical doctrine in the Bible, he looks like a madman or a scoffer laughing at the public."[1]

But the Jew no more regarded them as madmen or scoffers than the Mussulman so regards the softas

in his *Introduction* to the tract of the *Berakhoth*, to convince us of the excellence of the TALMUD, in which the learned editor scarcely succeeds with those who have had the patience to read the Rabbinical medley.

[1] A. WEILL, *Moïse et le Talmud*, p. 189–193. The three words underlined are from Rabbi MATTATHIAS, author of *Nizzachon vetus*.

or the dervishes, to whose comments and harangues he is an attentive listener. They knew it well. The common people took the doctrines seriously which flattered them by threatening them with Divine vengeance if they did not respect the Scribes and their teachings.[1]

Incapable of distinguishing between truth and error, between the Divine Word and human fancies, they accepted with confidence the medley in which these were confounded. The exaggerated practice of the Law struck their imagination because they judged of virtue by its forms, and the apparent austerity of the Doctors convinced them of their interior sincerity.[2]

Moreover, in this, they were not always mistaken, for there were some sincere spirits amongst them, such as that Gamaliel, grandson of the great Hillel, and Saint Paul's[3] master, on whom the Acts have bestowed just praise, and whom the Church has placed among the number of the elect.[4] Such men were rare among the Pharisees, at least amongst those of whom history has preserved the remembrance.

Their influence was small, to judge by Saul's fanaticism; unless it was that even their very teaching itself was the cause of that exclusive and persecuting ardor. It is only when Gamaliel became a Christian that he ceased to be the Scribe to whom the martyrdom of Saint Stephen might be attributed.[5]

Thus, to resume where we left off, the persons who surrounded Annas and Caiaphas on the morning of

[1] TALMUD, *Kiddouschin*, i. Compare Rabbi JOHANAN, *Berakhoth*, *Introduction*, p. xx.

[2] VIDAL, *Vie de Saint Paul*, vol. i. p. 23.

[3] ACTS APOSTLES v. 34.

[4] *Roman Martyrology*, 3 Aug.

[5] STAPFER, *La Palestine*, pp. 270–271.

the 14th Nisan, of the year 34, were divided into two groups, nearly equal in number: the High Priests and the Ancients of the people on one side, the Scribes and Doctors on the other, the former attached to the Sect of the Sadducees, the latter to that of the Pharisees.

At an ordinary time, perhaps, the two parties would have kept the balance even, if they did not hold each other in check, because it did not suit them to unite, on account of the concessions which would have lessened the power of one or other of them. But at the present hour, they were both equally threatened; that is to say, they were both interested in suppressing the cause of their anxiety.

The whip which drove the merchants whom the Sadducees had installed in the porches[1] out of the Temple, had lashed the shoulders of the Pharisees who were present, and singularly detracted from the joy which they felt at the humiliation of their opponents. The revelations written in the dust by the Master's finger had made no distinction between the accusers of the adulterous woman;[2] and the reproaches cast in the face of the hypocrite Scribes and Pharisees, some days before, had also struck the Priests and Ancients.[3] Having alike shared in the insult, they were now united in malice, and the Gospel shows them to us, holding counsel together on several occasions so as to better assure their ven-

[1] JOHN ii. 15. "And when he had made, as it were, a scourge of little cords, he drove them all out of the Temple. . . . The Jews therefore answered and said to him: What sign dost thou show us, seeing thou dost these things?"

[2] Idem. viii. 8. "And again stooping down he wrote on the ground."

[3] MATTHEW xxiii. 13. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites."

geance.[1] Therefore, there were no longer any divisions. Just as Pilate and Herod were about to do, they exchanged smiles and tokens of friendship. There was perfect agreement of will amongst them, against the Lord and against his Christ.[2]

[1] JOHN xi. 47. "The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees, gathered a council."

[2] PSALM ii. 2. "And the princes met together against the Lord, and against his Christ."

CHAPTER II

THE SANHEDRIM

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that their princes, and ancients, and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem. And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest." — ACTS APOSTLES iv. 5–6.

THE divisions which separated the Sadducees and the Pharisees in everyday life, did not prevent them from meeting and making common cause in public life, on administrative and judicial ground. This applies, at least, to the leaders and principal adherents of the two parties who were members of the Great Council or Sanhedrim.

This sovereign Assembly, sitting in Jerusalem, partook of the nature of the Parliament and of the Supreme Court of Justice, with powers difficult to define and to limit, by reason of the circumstances in which its prerogatives were employed. If we are to believe the Rabbis, it continued the office of the famous Council of the Seventy Ancients to whom Moses had entrusted the judgment of the most serious matters,[1] leaving affairs of secondary importance to magistrates of an inferior rank. In reality, the Council of the Ancients ceased its functions from the time the Hebrews entered Palestine, and history finds no trace of it during the twelve centuries which separate Joshua from the Asmoneans.

[1] EXODUS xxiv. 1, 9; NUM. xi. 16 and 24.

At the time of the Maccabees,[1] although the exact date cannot be fixed, the Sanhedrim [2] or Senate [3] first appears, which leads us to suppose that it was instituted by Judas or by Jonathas, if, indeed, the honor of this institution does not belong to their nephew John Hircanus. The *Talmud* sometimes designates the Sanhedrim by the name of Tribunal of the Asmoneans, on account of its origin, but usually it is known by the traditional name which is given to it by the Greek text of the Gospels,[4] and which is met with in Josephus and the other Jewish writers. The gravest questions of doctrine, of morals, and of administration came within its jurisdiction, and its decrees admitted neither of appeal nor of revision. It pronounced on questions relative to war, the enlargement of the city and its suburbs, and the institution of inferior tribunals. To it belonged the causes which concerned the whole of a tribe. It was this Assembly which launched the interdict against a town guilty of impiety and the supreme excommunication against false prophets. It could, if necessary, impeach the High Priest and inflict on him suitable penalties, even that of deposition, if the crime required such.[5]

It was, therefore, truly a sovereign assembly, "parliament and council," as Stapfer says, and there was no surprise manifested when the first of the Herods was cited to its bar, accused of interfering with its rights, by having put to death a bandit who belonged to its jurisdiction.[6]

[1] Between 170 and 106 before Jesus Christ.

[2] From the Greek word Συνέδριον meaning *assembly of people sitting*; or rather, from the Chaldean word *Sanhederin*, which is often found in the *Targums* and the *Talmud*. See LITTRÉ, FELIX BOVET.

[3] II MACC. i 10 and x. 1. "Γερουσια, *Senatus*."

[4] The VULGATE translates "*Concilium*." See MATTHEW xxvi. 59, etc.

[5] MISCHNA, tract *Sanhedrim*, i. 5.

[6] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.*, XIV. ix. 4.

By very reason of this sovereignty, the members of the Sanhedrim had to be chosen exclusively from amongst the priests, the most eminent doctors, and the heads of illustrious families. In the full assembly, there were three benches of judges, who, it might be said, were distributed in three chambers, according to the nature of the judgments to be given; that of the Priests, that of the Scribes, and that of the Ancients.

However, we can quote no authority in support of this theory; and, in our opinion, the Sanhedrim would be more correctly described as similar to the English House of Lords, with its lay and ecclesiastical peers, either hereditary or created by the Queen.

At first, no pre-eminence seems to have belonged to any of these three benches; but force of circumstances could not fail to invest the Chamber of Priests with the pre-eminence both of honor and action. Although the Sanhedrim was founded by princes invested with the Sovereign Priesthood, yet, at the same time, the High Priest did not preside over it [1] by right.

The Asmoneans allowed the Sanhedrim to exist in their vicinity, and to exercise its authority independently of them, their only anxiety being to prevent the undue preponderance of one party over the other, in which they succeeded, more or less, according to circumstances. Herod the Great did not take the same view of the matter. When he ascended the throne, he revenged himself for having been cited before the Sanhedrim, by suppressing the Tribunal. He caused all the Sanhedrists [2] to be put to death, with the exception of the

[1] In spite of Basnage's opinion, *Histoire des Juifs*, V. vi. p. 23; the TALMUD proves it clearly. Compare STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 94.

[2] Some write *Sanhedrists*, but it is impossible to justify this

two Presidents, Schemaïa and Abtalion,[1] whom their contemporaries named "the great men of their generation." Sadducees and Pharisees were alike proscribed. Herod wished to make a clean sweep, and to get rid of troublesome reminders of the past.

When reconstituting the Supreme Court of Israel with creatures of his own, new people, for the most part chosen from strangers, he did not, however, change the traditional organization. The change which marked it as a New Assembly, was the substitution of unknown Levites for the lawful inheritors of the priesthood, of upstarts, for the sons of the old races, and of doctors pleasing to those who were unable to divine what was passing in the monarch's mind. The number of assessors was seventy, as before. The presidents, whom tradition calls "sons of Bathyra," were appointed by the King.

This Sanhedrim, dishonored beforehand, had no great part in the life of Israel, and there is nothing interesting in its history. Only two facts are worthy of attention: the increase in the number of High Priests, and the consequent preponderance of the Sadducees.

As we said before, the High Priests were elevated and deposed at the will of every caprice. Herod and Archelaus, and after them the procurators of Judea and the governors of Syria, so often made and unmade the successors of Aaron, that in the year 34 of Jesus Christ eight were living together at Jerusalem. They were all members of the Sanhedrim,

form. However, the word Sanhedrite is neither Greek, Latin, nor French. In the sense of *Senator* it should be written Sanhedre or Synedre, from the Greek *συνέδρος*. Neither Bescherelle nor Littré admit it.

[1] Josephus calls them Sammacas and Pollion. The TALMUD (*Yoma*, 71, 6) gives them a pagan origin, for what reason is not known.

to which their friends and relatives were naturally attracted. Already allied by blood, and united by a common fortune, they formed, with their trusty adherents of the Tribe of Levi, too important a group not to be reckoned with.

The Sadducees who ruled, according to Josephus, over the Ancients of the Council, lived in harmony with them, and gave them an assured majority in all elections. The ruin of Archelaus, by restoring to the Sanhedrim part of its liberty, must, of necessity, have led to the preponderance of the sacerdotal party. The presidency was henceforth assured to the High Priests, and they never again lost control of the direction of affairs.[1]

Annas was thus the real Moderator of the Council, whether openly, in virtue of his title, or covertly behind his son-in-law, Caiaphas, when the latter took his place. The Pharisees were relegated to the background. They had, at most, a third of the votes, a very respectable minority, no doubt, but their rôle was played out, no matter what favor they enjoyed with the people. At an ordinary time, this might be a cause of regret; because, as we have already said, the Pharisees were not as harsh as their adversaries, and this made itself felt in their judgments. But with regard to Jesus Christ, their sentiments differed in no wise from those of the Sadducees, and consequently their suffrages would be given for the same purpose: the suppression of the common enemy. The Sanhedrim had possessed full jurisdiction until the entry of the Romans into Palestine, or, if preferred, until the accession to the throne of the first of the Herods. At that time, its right over life and death became somewhat

[1] Rabbi ABARBANEL, *Comment. sur la Loi*, folio 366. Compare STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 94 and 97; A. WEILL, *Moïse et le Talmud*, p. 186.

of a fallacy, although it was still written in the Law and acknowledged by Cæsar and the new King. But this power slipped from it completely, according to some, on the downfall of Archelaus, when Judea was reduced to a Roman province,[1] that is to say, twenty-three years before the death of Jesus Christ; "somewhat more than forty years before the fall of Jerusalem," the *Talmud*[2] says, which brings the date to Pilate's arrival, according to others.[3] Be that as it may, the *jus gladii* no longer belonged to it in the year 34. And if the wounded pride of the Sanhedrists sometimes drove them even to pronounce sentence of death, still it could not persuade them that they had the lawful executive powers.

The Gospel is not alone in saying this;[4] we find the proof of it equally in Josephus and in the Rabbis. The general desolation of which Rabbi Rachmon speaks, was evident proof that the Sceptre had departed from Juda, and that the time for the Messiah had come, for all those who were not guided solely by their passions.

The Sanhedrim usually sat in the Temple, and the principal cases were discussed in the hall called Lischat-ha-Gazith, or Paved Hall, situated in the eastern portion of the sacred Court.[5] Thus, the traditions of its origin were continued, according to which the Ancients sat in the Temple,[6] in obedience to the commands of the Lord Himself.[7] Sentences of death pronounced outside this hall were null and void, according to the *Talmud*, explained by

[1] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* XVII. xiii. 1–5.
[2] TALMUD of Jerusalem, tract *Sanhedrim*, fol. 24, recto.
[3] DEREMBOURG, *Essai*, etc., p. 90.
[4] JOHN xviii. 31. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."
[5] TALMUD of Babylon, tract *On Idolatry*, i. fol. 8.
[6] II PARALIP. xxvi. 15.
[7] DEUTER. xvii. 8, 10.

Maimonide in his tract, *Sanhedrim*. Hence the Rabbis have endeavored to prove that the cessation of criminal trials was owing to the merciful resolution taken by the members of the Great Council to hold no more sittings in the Hall of Gazith, on account of the increase of crime in Israel. As they could not bear to strike so many guilty heads, they preferred to deprive themselves of the right to convict them.[1]

This explanation, which at first sight appears strange, was plausible enough for the Jews, accustomed as they were to the precautions of all kinds that were taken to prevent death-sentences. It was not possible to put a criminal to death, however wicked he might seem, without an inquiry conducted with scrupulous exactness with regard to the witnesses, the depositions, and the pleading.

The judges could not continue to try a case at night which was commenced the preceding day, nor could they finish it the same day. They should vote on the following day, fasting, after a discussion in which each one joined with the freedom of intimate conversation, giving their votes aloud in full tribunal, which were at once collected by a Scribe. A majority of one could acquit, but not condemn; so that if the seventy members of the Council were all present at the session, thirty-seven votes were required for a verdict of guilty.

The slightest variation in the evidence of the witnesses, the least suspicion of contradiction, a disagreement of mere form, sufficed to render the evidence void, and consequently to save the guilty person. He could not by pleading guilty afford ground for the accusation, and it was forbidden to induce him to do so under penalty of nullifying the

[1] TALMUD of Babylon. Compare MAIMONIDE, *Constit. of the Sanhedrim*, xiv.

whole procedure. Every person present had the right to put forward an argument favorable to the defence, and, up to the moment of execution, the appeal of a passer-by might cause the whole affair to be tried again.

These are the reasons which have caused some of our modern savants[1] to attach importance to the assertion of the Talmudists, although in reality it is impossible to discover anything in the resolution of the Sanhedrists but a proof of the profound sorrow of the Jews at the measures taken by Rome against the Sanhedrim.[2]

In any case, it is certain that the *jus gladii* was no longer exercised in the year 34 by the members of the Great Council, who no longer held their sittings in the Hall Gazith, but in another place designated by the Greek word *Βουλή*, and situated in the Lower City,[3] probably at the foot of the flight of steps which led to the western entrance of the Temple and to the Forum of the Antonia.

In ordinary cases, one of the chambers alone could pronounce judgment, according to an opinion which we will not dispute; but in capital trials — the *Mischna* leaves no room for doubt — an assembly of the whole Sanhedrim was necessary; and if the High Priests sometimes allowed themselves to preside over a tribunal reduced to twenty-three members, every one regarded it as a flagrant irregularity and as an act of violence or of fraud.[4] The very composition

[1] STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 101.

[2] Abbé LEMANN, *Valeur de l'Assemblée*, etc.

[3] Which depends on the opinion regarding the site of the Xystus, to which this tribunal was adjacent. In the Middle Ages they wanted to place Pilate's Prætorium on this spot. See the *Itinéraire du Pèlerin de Bordeaux* and the *Chronique rimée de Philippe Mousket*. At the present time, the Christians at Jerusalem say it is the Mekhemeh or civil tribunal.

[4] SEPP, *Vie de Jésus*, ii. 79.

of the Assembly precluded all idea of separating the three chambers in cases of idolatry, seduction, false prophecy, etc.[1]

The Scribes were either Levites or laity, indifferently, and their presence at trials of doctrine was indicated by the very nature of the discussions and of the sentence. There was nothing to prevent the Ancients, or heads of great families, from being Doctors of the Law, and consequently, their competency in doctrinal matter was identical with that of the Priests and Scribes.

The fact that the Scribes and Ancients had often acted as Presidents of the Sanhedrim proves clearly the necessity of convoking the whole council in cases of greater importance. Hence the Acts show us the Sanhedrim convoked in full for the trial of the Apostles: the priests, the doctors, and the Ancients under the presidency of Annas at the head of the entire sacerdotal body.[2]

At the trial of Saint Stephen, the Ancients and the Scribes are named first of all,[3] and it would seem as if they alone were sitting, to the exclusion of the priests, if the Pontiff were not named a little later, as president of the Assembly.[4] With still greater reason must we think that the three orders of the Sanhedrim were called to try Our Saviour, and reject the singular opinion that the death-sentence was pronounced by the chamber of priests alone.[5]

The head of the Great Council bore the title of Nâci

[1] MISCHNA, tract *Sanhedrim*, i. 5.

[2] ACTS APOSTLES iv. 5, 6. "It came to pass . . . that their princes, and ancients, and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem, and Annas, the High Priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high-priest."

[3] ACTS APOSTLES vi. 12. "They stirred up the people, and the *ancients*, and the scribes."

[4] Id. vii. 1. "Then the *high-priest* said: Are these things so?"

[5] STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 103.

or Prince; and the vice-president that of Sâgan, according to some, of Ab-Beth-Din, or Father of the Tribunal, according to others. They occupied the seats of honor at the end of the Hall of Assembly, their colleagues being ranged to the right and left in a semicircle. At the feet of the Ancients, in the semicircle, crowded the Sopherim, or law-students, of whom we find the counterpart in the Softas of Islamism, and who attended regularly the sessions of the Council. At each end were seated the two secretaries, charged with marking the votes.

Police-agents and soldiers held themselves at the judges' disposal, and maintained order in the crowd who listened to the evidence and the pleading, with the right of taking part therein, if they thought fit to interfere on behalf of the accused who stood in the midst of the hired bullies.

We must, therefore, reconstruct exactly the judgment scene. At the distance of eighteen centuries we are assisting at the session of the Sanhedrim, during the night of the 14 Nisan (4th April) of the year 34, as we could have done if we had been inhabitants of Jerusalem at that time. Personal acquaintance with the most eminent of the judges is even not wanting to us, for Holy Scripture and History have taken care to preserve for us their names, and to tell us their character.

The President is Joseph-Kaïapha, the Caiaphas of the Gospel, acting High Priest, the son-in-law of Annas, who is regarded as the real High Priest by true believers. The latter sits beside the High Priest in quality of Sâgan, discreet and silent during the deliberations which he directs through his son-in-law, and to whom he usually dictates beforehand the conclusions. Beside these two are seated the deposed Pontiffs, — Eleazar, the eldest son of Annas and the brother-in-law of Caiaphas, Joazar and another Eleazar,

both sons of Simon Boëthus, Josue-ben-Sie, who was present at the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Ismaël-ben-Phabi, the handsomest man of his time, and one of those courtiers clothed in soft garments of whom the Saviour spoke to the disciples of John the Baptist,[1] Simon-ben-Kamith, deposed by Valerius Gratus in favor of Caiaphas. The names of these personages all belong to contemporary history. The Gospel only speaks of the two first; but Josephus introduces to us the six others,[2] and the *Talmud* has taken it on itself to complete, by some never-to-be-forgotten traits, the character of the two last.[3] After these come the sons of Annas, who have not yet worn the tiara, Jonathas, Theophilus, Matthias, whose memory Josephus has preserved, Simon Canthere, who will be Pontiff when his time comes, the priests, John and Alexander, mentioned in the Acts[4] as the judges of the Apostles on the day after Pentecost, Helkias,[5] the treasurer of the Temple, the man, probably, who paid Judas the thirty pieces for his treason, and who was to negotiate the purchase of the field of Haceldama.

The *Talmud* has not a good opinion of these councillors. "What a scourge," it exclaims, "is the family of Simon Boëthus! Wo to their tongues! What a scourge, the family of Annas! Wo to their viper's hiss! What a scourge, the family of Canthere! Wo to their pens! What a scourge, the family of Phabi! Wo to their hands! They are High Priests; their

[1] MATTHEW xi. 8. "A man clothed in soft garments."

[2] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* XV.–XIX. *Bell. Jud.* IV. etc.

[3] TALMUD, tracts *Pesachim* (Paschal feasts) and *Yoma* (expiations).

[4] ACTS APOSTLES iv. 6. "John and Alexander and as many as were of the kindred of the high-priest." Compare JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* XVIII. vi. 3 and XX. v. 2; Sepp (*Vie de N. S. Jésus-Christ*) makes them vicars-general of the Sâgan.

[5] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.*, XX. viii. ii.

sons are treasurers; their sons-in-law are captains of the Temple, and their servants beat the people with their sticks."[1] Does it not seem as if we were listening to the echo in Solomon's Porch repeating Our Saviour's reproaches against that race of vipers who were powerless to flee from the wrath of God?

The Scribes are not treated so badly by the *Talmud*. The reason is not far to seek. The *Talmud* was their work. But Renan has described them with a master hand, when speaking of their pretended knowledge of the Law. "It was," he says, "something similar to the barren doctrine of the Mussulman fakir; to that empty learning of those who are ever to be found disputing around a mosque; a great and useless expenditure of time and of dialectics, and which profited nothing to the proper training of the mind. . . . The knowledge of the Jewish Doctor, of the Sofer or Scribe was simply barbarian, irrational, with nothing to redeem it, destitute of all moral element. As the climax of misfortune, it filled those who wearied themselves in its acquirement with ridiculous pride. . . . These obnoxious people could not fail to jar on the susceptibilities of refined fastidious Northern natures."[2]

Of the Scribes, only one is known to us through Holy Scriptures, Gamaliel, the honest and prudent Councillor to whom the Apostles owed their lives at the time of their second imprisonment at Jerusalem.[3] He was a Pharisee, and Saint Paul tells us that he was his master[4] in the most celebrated school of the Holy City. The grandson of Hillel, he was equally

[1] Abbé LEMANN, *Valeur de l'assemblée*, etc. p. 27; *Pesachim*, fol 57, verso.

[2] *Vie de Jésus*, p. 207.

[3] ACTS APOSTLES v. 34–39.

[4] Id. xxii. 3. ". . . but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the truth of the law of the fathers."

commendable, in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen, for the nobility of his origin, the eloquence of his speech, and the integrity of his life. When he died, eighteen years after Jesus Christ, his soul had been enlightened by the true Light. The Church honors his memory on the 3rd of August.

If it were permissible to accept conjectures as proofs, we might name amongst the Scribes, Onkelos and Jonathas-ben-Uziel, celebrated for their *Targums*, or paraphrases of the Pentateuch, Samuel the Short, author of the *Birhat-Hamminim* or *benediction of the infidels*, written against the Christians, a short time after the Resurrection, Hanania-ben-Hiskia, Ishmael-ben-Elija, Rabbi Zadok, Rabbi Nahum, etc., contemporaries of Our Saviour, and who were probably admitted to the Sanhedrim at the time of which we are speaking, but about whom we have no information sufficiently exact for us to impute to them any responsibility for Our Saviour's condemnation. The only one whom we can surely associate with the Sanhedrists of the year 34, is Simeon, Gamaliel's son, the friend of the too famous John of Giscala, and his helper in resisting Titus. He perished, sword in hand, at the last assault of the Romans against the dying city.[1]

Doctor Sepp quotes several other names admitted by subsequent writers.[2] Without disputing the authority of the German savant, or the worth of his inductions, we may be permitted to regard those proofs to which he adheres as insufficient. It is the same with reference to the suppositions relative to the Court of the Ancients. If we except Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, made known to us by the

[1] Abbé LEMANN, *Valeur de l'assemblée*, etc. p. 30; MISCHNA, tract *Abot* (of the Fathers).

[2] SEPP, *Life of Jesus Christ*, v. ii., p. 83, etc.

Gospel,[1] Ben Tsittit-Haccassat and Ben-Calba-Schebouat, named in the *Talmud*,[2] there is nothing precise known about the councillors belonging to this fraction of the Sanhedrim, the least influential but the most estimable, and the least hostile to Jesus Christ, according to the *Talmud*.[3] But we must take from this estimate somewhat, when we find Josephus stating that the adherents of Sadduceeism, that is to say, materialism in doctrine and practice, were mainly recruited among the wealthy classes of Jewish society,[4] which, after all, the *Talmud* does not contradict, when it decries the ostentation and the effeminacy of certain Sanhedrists. As we have already seen, the Gospel often brings upon the scene the Sadducees of the Great Council, with their scoffing scepticism and their concealed immorality. The woman taken in adultery was very near having proof of the harshness with which their judgments are credited, and the Divine Master could not fail to find them implacable enemies.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus-ben-Gorion alone escape the reprobation which attaches to the whole of this Chamber of the Ancients. The first, a good and just man[5] who lived in secret expectation of the kingdom of God,[6] not daring to manifest his belief in the Messiah of Israel, if not through fear, at least through a remnant of human respect which the Gospel does not absolutely condemn.[7] He was of noble origin, of large fortune, and received an unusual

[1] See for Joseph, MATTHEW xxvii. 57; MARK xv. 43, etc. For Nicodemus, JOHN iii. 1, and following, vii. 50, xix. 39.

[2] TALMUD, tract *Gittin* (of divorce), v. fol. 56, verso.

[3] Abbé LEMANN, work quoted, p. 40.

[4] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.*, XVIII. i. 4.

[5] LUKE xxiii. 50. "A good and just man."

[6] MARK xv. 43. "Who was also himself looking for the Kingdom of God."

[7] JOHN xix. 38. "Because he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews."

amount of consideration from the Procurator, as is proved by the confidence with which he ventured to approach him on the evening of Good Friday.

The second, a doctor in Israel,[1] was famous for his doctrine, his fortune, and his virtue. "Rich enough," says the *Talmud*, "to feed the population of Jerusalem for ten years,"[2] he lived the austere life of the Pharisees, not to gain the approval of men, but to secure the favor of God. Timid at first, he did not long delay to raise his voice in the council in favor of the Prophet of Nazareth, and drew upon himself the threatening retort, "Art thou also a Galilæan?"[3]

Both of them must have held themselves aloof during the course of the iniquitous trial for which the Sanhedrim was preparing. The Gospel says plainly of Joseph, that he did not consent to the designs nor the acts of his colleagues.[4] Nicodemus followed the same line of conduct, on account, perhaps, of the friendship which bound them, according to a venerable tradition. They were to meet again soon, in the same spirit, at the foot of the Cross, to render the last honors to Him whom they were unable to protect from death.

Thus, only three members of the Sanhedrim could have been favorable to the Divine Accused: Gamaliel, Joseph, and Nicodemus. Were they summoned to the Council? Nothing is less likely. It is hard to believe that they would not have made some protest of which the Gospel would preserve the remembrance, and yet the sacred text does not contain even a remote allusion to this act of courageous honesty.

[1] JOHN iii. 10. "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"

[2] TALMUD, tract *Gittin*.

[3] JOHN vii. 52.

[4] LUKE xxiii. 51. "The same had not consented to their counsel and doings."

For a long time the High Priests had laughed at any regulations for the proceedings which might interfere with their whims. It even often happened that they held a Court of Justice with only twenty-three members of the Council, that is to say, with one-third of the judges whom they should have convoked.[1] Without doubt, Annas and Caiaphas had scrutinized the names on the list of councillors, and counted the votes of which they were certain. The Gospel shows us the Sanhedrists assembled in full council,[2] but, perhaps, these words cannot be taken too literally, for Saint Luke expressly tells us that Joseph took no part in the judgment pronounced. Therefore, we have no difficulty in saying that the High Priests only convoked their adherents, or else arranged matters in such a way as to discourage those whom they knew to be hostile to their designs. The Divine Master was about to find Himself, according to that famous saying, not before judges, but before His accusers, or, rather, before assassins. The words of Caiaphas, "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not," formulated beforehand a sentence of death. He knew it, for He had Himself dictated to the unscrupulous Pontiff the prophecy of the liberation of that people by His death.[3] Therefore, He entered, of His free will, into this fresh ordeal, wherein the assertion of His Divinity would serve as a pretext for the charge of blasphemy and place Him beyond the pale of the law.

[1] Stapfer (*La Palestine*, 103) expresses a strange opinion equally at variance with the Gospel and the Mischna.

[2] MARK xv. 1. "The chief priests holding a consultation with the ancients and the scribes, and the whole council."

[3] JOHN xi. 51. "And this he spoke not of himself (Caiaphas): but being the high priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation."

There is not, perhaps, in the whole of the Saviour's passion, a more mysterious hour, nor one in which the Power is more clearly revealed which the priests and Pharisees were unconsciously obeying. They were seeking to destroy their enemy, without compromising themselves, by striking Him at the time and in the manner which suited them, but it pleased Him to baffle their artifices and to reduce their precautions to nothing.

Above all, His arrest must not take place during the festival-time; the multitude assembled at Jerusalem must not see the murder, lest they might riotously interfere.

And, behold, on the very eve of the festival, they have been led to lay hands on Him, to decide at once upon His condemnation, for which the multitude will presently make themselves responsible amidst the most frightful tumult. What they dreaded still more, the Roman interference, was about to take place, in spite of them, in spite of their apparent spontaneity, and the result of their crime would be to expose to the whole world the downfall of Israel. The words of the Prophet, "Iniquity hath lied to itself,"[1] never had more complete application.

Jesus had predicted all this, eight days before, with the calm certainty of the Master to whom neither men nor events can say, "I will not serve."[2] He had left them at liberty to define their projects, and to prepare their realization; then He had murmured scornfully, "Remember this, and be ashamed . . . for I am God, . . . neither is there the like to Me. Who show from the beginning the things that shall be . . . saying: my counsel shall stand, and all my will shall be done."[3]

[1] PSALM xxvi. 12.
[2] JEREM. ii. 20.
[3] ISAI. xlvi. 8–10.

CHAPTER III

ANNAS INTERROGATES JESUS CHRIST

"And they led him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high-priest of that year. The high-priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine." — JOHN xviii. 13 and 19.

THE agents of the Sanhedrim did not conduct their Prisoner straight to the palace of the High Priest, Caiaphas. They brought Him first to the abode of Annas,[1] quite close to the palace, if indeed it did not form part of it, as is the opinion of commentators of the greatest authority.[2]

There is nothing easier to understand than that Caiaphas and his father-in-law should live under the same roof, by reason of their relationship, and their participation in the same functions, the more so that it did not prevent the sufficient separation necessary to the liberty of each High Priest and his family. Those who have been in the East, have no difficulty in understanding this proximity, which yet allows of distinct habitations, buildings, courts, and gardens for each of the families thus grouped together in the same enclosure.

The old seraglio at Constantinople is an example of this, with its palaces, kiosks, and groves, separated only by hedges, or even by paths which, none the

[1] JOHN xviii. 13. "They led Him away to Annas first." Compare STRAUSS, *Nouvelle Vie de Jésus*, ii.

[2] See FILLION, *Comment. sur Saint Jean.* Compare RIESS, *Atlas of the Bible*, etc.

less, form boundaries which are respected. Moreover, it would be quite possible to find similar examples in our European world, without having recourse to the Roman or Greek dwellings, the restoration of which has been so well carried out by our savants.

Tradition, it is true, does not seem always to agree with the critics on this point, and the traveller is rather embarrassed how to choose between contradictory statements, when he enters the Sion Gate.

In fact, the present wall separates the house of Caiaphas from that of his father-in-law[1] by a distance of about one hundred and fifty yards. But it is important to remark that the present wall is modern, and that the two houses were formerly in the interior of the city, more than one hundred yards from the old fortifications.[2] There is therefore no difficulty in joining the dwelling of Annas to that of Caiaphas, on the ground pointed out by tradition, since the fourth century,[3] at least.

Gardens and courts included, the dwelling of the High Priests would cover an area of about two and a half acres, which is nothing extraordinary, when we remember the number of officers, servants, guards, and slaves of both sexes who lived around the Pontiffs. The Louvre alone is larger than their two palaces united.

The care which Saint John takes to tell us whither Jesus was led at first, enables us to follow the Divine Master, step by step, from Gethsemani to the interior of the Upper City.

[1] The house said to be that of Caiaphas is outside the Sion Gate, in the court of the Armenian convent. That of Annas is in the interior of the city; the church of the Armenian nuns occupies the traditional site (see LIÉVIN, *Guide*, pp. 217 and 222).

[2] Which some *historians* of Christ seem not to know.

[3] M. DE VOGUÉ (*Les églises*, etc.), *Le Pèlerin de Bordeaux*.

If He entered the city of David by the Sion Gate, as some narrators insist, He would first meet with the part of the palace inhabited by Caiaphas; whereas, coming by the south, He should cross the quarter included between the ramparts and the square which stood on the eastern front of Herod's palace, and thus reach the private dwelling of the ex-High Priest.

Let us add that this quarter seems to have been almost a wilderness, a fact which the Scribes and their agents must have taken into consideration.[1]

Be that as it may, the Prisoner's guards brought him to the inner apartments, into the presence of Annas, not for trial, properly so called, nor even for a regular examination, — which there is no serious reason for supposing,[2] — but to gratify their master's wish.[3] In fact, it must have given him no small pleasure to see his adversary, hitherto triumphant, now broken and humiliated. There was something of the tiger in this cunning old fox, and since the thirst for blood had seized him, he acted like the fox, which plays with its victim before taking its life. Perhaps the Sanhedrim had not yet assembled at the house of Caiaphas. He would then have a little time to himself in which to gratify his hatred before delivering the Galilæan up to the janitors of the Great Council. The scene is worth recalling, as far as our knowledge of the persons, the places, and the circumstances will permit.

[1] Ludolph the Carthusian understood perfectly the reason for this route on the return from Gethsemani. "Pluribus autem de causis ducebant eum primo ad Annam. Quarum una est, quia domus Annæ prior eis in via occurrebat . . . vel forte illuc divertebant ne in via longiori tumultus in populo fieret." *Vita Jesu Christi*, Part II. lix.

[2] However, some see in Annas, in virtue of his position of Sâgan, or vice-president, a sort of examining judge or of solicitor-general. See CATHERINE EMMERICH, *Douloureuse Passion*, viii.

[3] LUDOLPH, *Vita Jesu Christi.*

Annas, with his white beard and worn features, seemed at first sight one of those patriarchs so often alluded to in the Sacred Writings, as the familiar friends of God, equally pleasing to Heaven as to earth, burdened with years and with merit, venerable even in the eyes of the wicked, especially when clothed with the dignity of the priesthood. He was not sitting, at that moment, as President of the college of priests, and, no doubt, a simple, compassionate bearing — such as becomes old age in the presence of misfortune — tempered the majesty of his appearance.

The reserve imposed on him in virtue of his office as judge, and the position of the unexpected visitor, threw a shadow of gravity over his features which completed the striking appearance of the successor of Aaron.

Standing before him in the dim light of the lamps, was a man of peerless beauty, but pale, with pensive eyes and disordered garments, — a Prisoner who seemed scarcely conscious of His position in the midst of the crowd surrounding Him. Absorbed in Himself, as it were, He neither heard nor saw anything; and although His hands were for the moment free, He unresistingly obeyed the directions given Him, a true lamb led to the slaughter,[1] without complaint and without resistance.

Around Him was the band of satellites and servants, upon whom the torches and lanterns threw a weird light as they stood grinning in that semi-darkness, like sneering hyenas waiting for the remains of the prey torn by the leopard. Were it not for the respect due to the Pontiff, and their servile fear of showing too much zeal, what excesses would not the Captive have had to suffer? But they felt that they

[1] Isai. liii. 7. "Led as a sheep to the slaughter."

must restrain their brutality; besides, they would not have long to wait, Annas was in a hurry to enjoy his Victim's anguish.

He began, therefore, to question our Lord about His doctrine and His disciples. Very likely he took it for granted that He was a member, if not the ring-leader, of some one of the numerous secret societies which infested Palestine ever since the Roman invasion and the enthronement of the Herods.

The bloody suppression of all hostile manifestations to the new régime had driven the malcontents to combine in secret with signs and passwords similar to those of modern conspirators. At these conferences, enthusiastic orators reanimated their convictions, and strengthened their hopes by teachings which the official doctors stigmatized as heterodox and revolutionary.

Josephus, who, it seems, had been at one time initiated into these mysteries, speaks of them, sometimes, in terms of praise, and says that they served as a bond between all those who loved freedom.[1] The number of proselytes was considerable, too much so, because it hardly allowed of their doctrines and projects being kept secret, which explains the sort of toleration which they enjoyed, for thirty years and longer, in the dominions of Herod Antipas, and even as far as the enceinte of Jerusalem. The adherents scarcely concealed the title of Kanaïm, Zelators, or Zealots, which they bore, whilst waiting for the day when it should be revealed in full splendor. The

[1] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.*, XVIII. 1. The Mussulman countries threatened with conquest, or already conquered, are still, at the present time, infested with these secret societies, the members of which bear the name of *Khouans* or *brothers;* they are the descendants of the *haberim* or *companions* of Palestine. Our (French) soldiers have often to contend against insurrections raised by the fanaticism of the Algerian *Khouans.*

Apostle Simon is designated by this appellation,[1] in the Gospel, which makes no comment thereon. The Pharisees contributed to these societies; this is to be understood of the more ardent partisans of Schammaï, the severe and inflexible doctor, the inspirer of Judas the Galilæan whose posthumous influence led to the rebellion of 66, the destruction of the Temple, and the dispersion of Israel. The Essenians, although their ways were different, were, none the less, among the number of Pharisees belonging to the secret doctrine, Zelators also, after their own fashion, silent but implacable enemies of Herod.

The orthodoxy of these Puritans was not always irreproachable; and the Sadducees had good reason to suspect them. Fatalism, the Chaldean and Egyptian practices of magic, were often mingled with the doctrines of free inquiry and absolute independence. Moses was scarcely more respected than Cæsar or Antipater, as was very evident on the day when the Zealots, become hired assassins, led the people to attack the Antonia in order to drive forth the legionaries, and at the same time, to attack the Temple and drive forth from it their fellow-citizens.

Was it pretence on the part of Annas to treat Our Lord as a member, if not an actual leader, of some one of these sects, or did he really believe that such was the case? The question is rather a difficult one to answer. The old Pontiff had too much acuteness and knowledge of men; he had set too close a watch upon the Prophet and His disciples, not to be quite conversant with the character and the doctrine of his Captive.

On the other hand, we must not forget that every true Oriental, and still more, every true Israelite, is

[1] LUKE vi. 15. "Simon who is called Zelotes." Compare ACTS APOSTLES i. 13.

suspicious; suspicion seems to him a natural part of prudence, and it would have been a marvel if Annas had not been disposed to look for a wrong side to what he knew of the man and of His teaching.

"Was He not a Galilæan, that is to say, the fellow-countryman of Judas the Galilæan? Was He not perpetually talking of a mysterious kingdom which God was preparing on earth, in which those faithful to Him alone should share? Did He not demand absolute devotedness to Himself? Did He not openly profess that He brought the sword, and that He wished to enkindle fire? Did He not pamper the lowly and the wretched by attacking the rich and those who were happy? Did He not despise the popular rites and customs, in order that He might replace them by new practices? Did He not say plainly that He would inaugurate another form of worship, purely spiritual, and intended for all mankind? And to finish, had He not recommended His disciples, when He made them Apostles, not to reveal the doctrine to all comers, not to cast the sacred bread to dogs?"[1]

Therefore, there might have been some doubt in the High Priest's mind. The Preacher's frankness, and His reserve, equally disconcerted him. What was to be his decision? How should he settle the matter? It would be a clever thing to question the Prisoner Himself, at this moment, when, alone, and no doubt, rendered desperate by humiliation, vexation, and fear, feeling that He was at the mercy of His judge, He would no longer retain that self-possession, that boldness in reply, of which He had given so many proofs. A confession was scarcely probable, but it was possible. A denial would perhaps lead to a discussion in which the truth might come to light.

[1] See the Gospels (*passim*).

There was nothing unbecoming in thus feeling one's ground. Circumstances would determine the course to be pursued, if it were necessary to take further steps. Then Annas put the question. But what was his amazement, when he heard the reply.

"I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou Me? ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them; behold! they know what things I have said."[1]

These words, uttered in a firm and dignified tone, admitted of no reply. There was no mysterious doctrine, nor secret conference. Friends and enemies alike had heard all, and could give testimony.

Of what use now to pursue this interrogation, which only tended to give the matter a character which it could not have. The chief cause of the proceedings against Him was the very audacity of His teaching, that is to say, the publicity which they had vainly striven to prevent; witnesses were not wanting, and his rôle was to wait for them, that is, supposing it pleased the Sanhedrim to call them.

To speak respectfully, the refusal to answer was not less categorical, and stamped with a severe irony which no one mistakes. Jesus did not dispute the old Pontiff's right to put questions to Him, and those commentators who would fain see in His words an implied rebuke to Annas for his want of authority, seem to us to strain the text, and to attribute to Our Saviour a meaning which He never intended. In the eyes of the Jews who had remained faithful to tradition, Caiaphas was an intruder. Annas, on the contrary, was the real High Priest, and, consequently, the President of the Tribunal appointed to try all cases of doctrine. Most

[1] JOHN xviii. 20.

undoubtedly the moment was badly chosen, and the proceedings absolutely irregular. Our Lord was only obliged to reply to the full court of the Sanhedrim, with all the securities settled by the Law. But the Gospel does not allow us to suppose that the questions of the High Priest were of the nature of a judicial inquiry. They rather concealed the snare which it is permitted, and even advised, by the *Talmud* to set for the seducer (Mesith), by provoking compromising answers in the hearing of witnesses who had been previously secreted.[1] Still, it requires a certain effort of the imagination to grasp this; and the simplest way is to admit that the Pontiff wanted to show his acuteness, while satisfying his curiosity at the same time. Our Lord was not obliged to play into His adversary's hands; that is evident, and His answer proves how little He concerned Himself about the matter. He showed, at one stroke, the uselessness, the irregularity, and the unbecomingness of the question: useless, because it had no object; irregular, because it inferred the making of a confession, which was contrary to the Law; unbecoming, since it was an outrage against the accused on the very part of the most elevated representative of justice. Such is the real meaning of these words, "Why askest thou Me?" and what follows declares it plainly. They were so understood by those around.

A painful silence followed Our Divine Lord's answer. Annas had too much wisdom not to perceive the false step which he had taken, and his pride must have suffered cruelly from the lesson it had received.

None of those around were capable of retorting on the Divine Master, — a dangerous undertaking more-

[1] TALMUD, tract *Sanhedrim*, book vi. Compare WEILL, *Moïse et le Talmud*, pp. 180–181.

over, which it was not prudent to risk, as experience had so often proved.

Every one was silent, and there were anxious looks, and a general desire was felt for some incident which would put an end to the universal embarrassment. One of the servants took it on himself to provide such. Malek or Malchus,[1] whose ear had suffered in the Garden of Olives, was amongst the bystanders. What was the motive which had urged him to come quite near to Jesus: the desire to see him more at his ease, gratitude for the cure of his wound, a secret thirst for vengeance against the chief of the Galilæans who had ill-treated him? Who can tell? But if gratitude had been at first the mainspring of his curiosity, it quickly vanished before the desire to flatter, which is at the bottom of all coarse minds. Perhaps, too, he was galled at finding his companions and himself brought on the scene. "Ask those who have heard me." But, let it be as it may, the fact remains that this wretch dared to strike the Master in the face, crying out "Dost thou answer the High Priest so?"[2]

The Law absolutely forbade these outrages, and punished those who perpetrated them; but habits prevailed over the Law, and those who were accused before the Tribunals of the East often had experience of what the weakness of the magistrates allowed to the brutality of their servitors. For a long time the spirit of moderation and of wisdom had ceased to animate the judges of Israel, and even the influence of Rome did not always suffice to make them behave

[1] Saint John Chrysostom, *Homil.* lxxx. says on this subject, "Curavit eum (Jesus) qui super eum venerat et paulo post alapam daturus est."

[2] John xviii. 22. "And when he had said these things, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Answerest thou the High Priest so?"

with the commonest justice, as is proved by the reading of the *Acts of the Apostles*, or, if you will, that of the *Talmud*, which is very instructive from this point of view. Malchus might, therefore, commit with impunity an outrage for which Annas should have blushed if he retained any sentiment of his dignity. The Pontiff being silent, the attendants could only approve.

Our Lord turned quietly to Malchus,[1] "If I have spoken evil," He said, making allusion to the testimony which they sought against Him, "give testimony of the evil, but if well, why strikest thou Me?"

What was taking place at that moment in the soul of Malchus? Did it respond, as Peter's soul was to do shortly, to the appeal of the Divine Mercy? Some have thought so,[2] and truly, it is a belief worthy of the Clemency which did not resent the Apostle's denial, nor the insults of the thief, nor the thrust of the soldier's lance. Only those were not converted, *whose souls*, according to the expression of Catherine Emmerich, *were completely enslaved by the devil*,— such as the Scribes and Pharisees, whom the words of the Master had not overthrown in the Garden of Gethsemani.[3]

Our Lord's reply to the High Priest left part of the question unanswered: that which regarded the Apostles. The reason is easily understood. After having said to those sent by the Sanhedrim, "Let these go their way," He could not bring them into the affair again. Accomplices, that is to say, fellow-prisoners, He would have none. He alone was to face the danger, He alone must be the victim. Hence that reply in which His personal responsibility

[1] John xviii. 23.
[2] Catherine Emmerich, *Douloureuse Passion*, vi.
[3] Id. *loc. cit.*

is so clearly set forth; rarely does the sacred text show such precision and such energy. The "I" fills the whole passage with a supernatural fulness and majesty. Annas understood Him not. Judging it useless to continue the examination, he made them bind the hands of Jesus, contrary to the Law, which left the accused his liberty, and sent Him then to Caiaphas,[1] in whose apartment the Sanhedrists were assembled, not the whole number, as we have already said, but those whose votes were assured beforehand. Annas should have made no delay in following Our Lord; but he seems to have taken his time. He wanted to recover from the emotion which the Saviour's replies had caused him. What rage must have disturbed his soul at that moment! The Galilæan of whom he wanted to make sport had returned his malice against himself,[2] and he, the High Priest and the Prince of Israel, had received this double slap on the face, to which that of Malchus was as nothing, and he had been imprudent enough to allow that canaille to be witness of his humiliation, the canaille, so often favorable to the Prophet, perhaps even still ready to return to Him as they did on the day when the satellites had returned, saying, "Never man spoke as this man."[3]

But what angered him most was the calmness which Jesus had displayed. Would not any one have sworn that He was directing, according to His own will, the incidents of the case, instead of being the accused, liable to capital punishment? How sure He seemed of Himself, scorning the intrigues in which, notwithstanding, He was caught as in a net, paying His con-

[1] JOHN xviii. 24. "And sent him bound to Caiaphas the high-priest."

[2] PSALM xxvi. 12. "Iniquity hath lied to itself."

[3] JOHN vii. 46. "Never did man speak like this man."

querors the compliment, as it were, of allowing Himself to be conquered. Annas persisted in dreaming of triumph. He had lost the first game, it is true; but his revenge would be the more striking and complete. He would know well how to bring back public opinion and confound his adversary. The old tiger sharpened his claws and teeth with delight at the thought of the flesh which he was about to tear.[1]

But he did not dare admit this to himself; he was afraid. The darkness seemed to grow denser, and strange sounds floated through it. The fox, uneasy, rose, pricked up its ears, and shivered. He had evoked death; it was coming, ready to seize his destined victim. Yet when he beheld it thus docile at his side, he was tempted to cry out despondingly, "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"[2]

If he had not been stunned by the tumult of his thoughts, he might have heard the answer, placed by the Prophet Hosea, centuries before, on the Messiah's lips: "O death, I will be thy death,[3] O hell, I will be thy bite, Death is swallowed up in victory. Now the sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law."[4]

The fool should have known that the Master had again quite recently foretold the futility of the priests' efforts. He, indeed, permitted them to insult Him, and deliver Him to the Gentiles; but of themselves they were unable to do anything towards the accomplishment of the Deicide. In the great drama wherein He was the principal figure, He relegated them to the background, like those supernumeraries

[1] DANIEL vii. 19. "His teeth and claws were of iron; he devoured and broke in pieces; and the rest he stamped upon with his feet."

[2] I Cor. xv. 55. [3] HOSEA xiii. 14. [4] I Cor. xv. 54, 56.

whom nobody notices, although they are appointed to represent the anger of the multitude, or the swelling of the tempest.

At the very most, they were of use to fill up the hours which separated Him from the moment when He would condescend to knock at the door of Rome's representative, to dictate, in some sort, the terms of His death-sentence. Meanwhile, He was giving them time to pour out for Him the measure of vinegar and gall fixed by His Father. All their hatred could not add to that measure a single drop, no more than Peter's rash friendship had been able to lessen the bitterness [1] thereof.

[1] JOHN xviii. 11. "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

CHAPTER IV

SAINT PETER DENIES OUR SAVIOUR

"Amen, I say to thee that in this night, before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice." — MATTHEW xxvi. 34.

"Again therefore Peter denied; and immediately the cock crew." — JOHN xviii. 27.

STRANGE coincidence! At the moment when Our Lord appealed to the testimony of His own, and said to Annas, "Inquire of them," Peter, the chief of the Apostles, questioned by one of the servants, was answering, "I know not the man."[1]

Who could have foreseen this desertion at the hour when Peter said, with his hand on the hilt of his sword, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death. Although all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized."[2] When he drew his sword to rush into the mêlée, at the risk of compromising himself so seriously, who would then have believed that he would so soon fall away. Poor Peter! he had relied upon himself, and the Master's warning had not made him in the least mistrustful of himself. "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny Me."[3] He was to serve as a lesson to presumptuous vanity, and to show us with what humble confidence the truly repentant are inspired.

[1] LE CAMUS, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.* iii. p. 285.
[2] LUKE xxii. 33; MATTHEW xxvi. 33.
[3] MARK xiv. 72.

At the moment that Jesus gave Himself up to those sent by the Sanhedrim, the Apostles fled in all directions, Peter and John as well as the rest, with this difference, that the latter only provided for their immediate safety, whilst the former, losing their heads, put the greatest distance possible between themselves and the danger.[1] The result was that Peter and John soon followed their Master,[2] but at a sufficient distance to avoid recognition, and at the same time near enough to keep Him in sight; so that they were with Him when He entered the palace of the High Priest with whom the beloved disciple had long-standing relations.[3] What those relations were, and from what time they dated, the Gospel has not thought fit to tell us, and the commentators have tried in vain to discover; but in any hypothesis, they must have been of such nature as to render John sufficiently familiar with the High Priest to roam about at will in the Pontiff's dwelling. Therefore, he entered the court at the same time as his Master, following the Sanhedrists. Peter remained outside, near the outer door,[4] not venturing to penetrate into the interior of the palace, where he would have been in danger.

When the hour came for the regular trial which must take place, he would be entitled, like every other Israelite, to present himself before the Tribunal, as a witness for the Prisoner, protected by the absolute

[1] Saint Augustine (*Comment. in Joannem, loc. cit.*) says of the Apostles, "Fugerunt, relicto eo corde et corpore."

[2] JOHN xviii. 15. "And Simon Peter followed Jesus; and so did another disciple."

[3] Id. Ibid. "And that disciple was known to the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the high-priest."

[4] JOHN xviii. 16. "But Peter stood at the door without." (*πρὸς τῇ θύρᾳ.*) This must be understood as meaning that Peter remained in the street or in the square, and not that he waited at the door of the apartment in which the conversation took place between Our Lord and Annas. What Catherine Emmerich says about Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus has no serious foundation.

immunity afforded to all who desired to defend the accused. But that time had not yet come.

In the interval, he might be recognized and arrested as a rebel, impeached for attempted murder, and in all probability punished. Was he afraid of this? Did he fear, also, to injure his Master, instead of being of use to Him? Did prudence take the place of that rash enthusiasm of which he now experienced the consequences? It is possible. But, at the same time, we may believe that he was full of impatience to get near His Lord, that he might at least see Him, even if he could not assist Him.

John understood his friend's wishes, and leaving the atrium as soon as he had seen Our Lord enter the High Priest's private apartments, he went to say a word to the young girl who was attending to the door.

Peter was at once allowed to enter.[1] As he passed in, the portress, who was looking at him inquisitively, said, "Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?"[2]

There was nothing strange in the question. John was known as His disciple. The servant did not doubt but that he had come to help his Master, and naturally that his friend belonged to the same school, and that his dispositions were the same. If she intended any irony, the Gospel makes no mention of it, but, no doubt, Peter detected some malice in her question, for he hastened to answer, "I am not."[3]

Evidently, the Apostles did not consider there was

[1] JOHN xviii. 16. "The other disciple therefore who was known to the high-priest, went out, and spoke to the portress and brought in Peter." It was the custom amongst the Jews, and the ancients generally, to have women, either slaves or simple servants, to attend to the door. II KINGS iv. 5. Compare EURIPIDES, *Troades*, v. 193, 491; PLAUTUS, *Curculio*, act 1, sc. 1, v. 75; PLINY, xv. 30, etc.; TIBULLUS, 1, 6, etc.

[2] Id. 17 (ἡ παιδίσκη ἡ θυρωρός).

[3] Id. 17. He saith: "I am not."

anything shocking in this denial. John heard it, and surely Peter would not like to deny his Master before such a witness. Probably, he was afraid of being arrested on the very threshold of the door which he wished to enter, and to be arrested by a servant would be at once painful and ridiculous. He answered without very well knowing what he was saying, with his usual hastiness, and he entered the court, where John left him to go to his Master.

It would be difficult to understand what follows, unless we had an exact idea of the place. The researches which enable us to form an exact idea of the customs of the ancients, also serve to bring before our eyes, as it were, the plan of that part of the Palace into which we have entered in company of the Apostle.[1]

After the outer door, opening on the public road, a rather deep vestibule in which was the portress's lodge, preceded the court or atrium spoken of by the Gospel.[2] A covered gallery ran round this atrium,[3] of which the Moorish *patio*, with its marble pavement and springing fountain, is the counterpart. At the end, facing the entrance, a vast hall, the *divan* of modern Orientals, served on ordinary occasions for receptions; and on this night for Our Lord's examination. Beneath the side galleries, to the right

[1] According to some, Annas and Caiaphas resided in the palace built by the High Priest, Eliasib, on the return of the Jews with Nehemiah (II ESDRAS, iii. 1).

[2] The outer door (θύρα) was called in Latin *janua*, to distinguish it from the inner door opening into the atrium and which was called *ostium*. — PLAUTUS (*Pers.* v. 1–6) points them both out distinctly: "*Ante ostium et januam.*" The porter was named, as in the Greek text of the Gospel, θυρωρός, but the distinction of names did not exist in the language of the time, and it is impossible to find fault with Saint Jerome who has translated *ostiaria* and *ostium* (See RICH. *Dictionary — Janitor, Janua, Ostium*, and *Ostiarius*).

[3] "Cella ostiaria." PETRONIUS, *Satires*, 29.

and left, were doors giving access to the private apartments; and nearer to the vestibule were the servants' lodgings, with, perhaps, a guard-house and other out-offices.[1]

In the centre of the court,[2] the servants had placed the traditional *mangal*, which was a copper vessel filled with burning charcoal,[3] and they were warming themselves, together with the satellites, in a group round the fire. As the nights in Palestine at that time of year are cold, those who are obliged to watch during the night-time are always careful to light a fire of sticks, if they are in the country, and of charcoal, if they are in an inhabited place. The light of the glowing embers blended with that of the torches carried by the hired agents and of the lanterns suspended from the arches of the gallery, producing, even in the recesses where the moonbeams did not penetrate, a sort of twilight, sad and mysterious, which suited the circumstances.

Peter approached the brazier, not so much to warm himself, as to observe how matters were going.[4] His presence was not remarked at first. He remained standing[5] in the outermost circle, on the side near the entrance-door,[6] trying to get a glimpse over the servants' shoulders of what was passing in the hall facing him, and prudently keeping silence.

By degrees he became accustomed to the situation,

[1] There is nothing imaginative in this picture, all the details of which are pointed out in the Gospel narrative, as will be easily seen by an attentive perusal.

[2] LUKE xxii. 55. "And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sitting about it."

[3] JOHN xviii. 18. "Now the servants and ministers stood at a fire of coals."

[4] MATTHEW xxvi. 58. "Going . . . might see the end."

[5] JOHN xviii. 18. "And with them was Peter also standing."

[6] MATTHEW xxvi. 69. "Without in the court." MARK xiv. 66. "In the court, below."

and feeling certain that he had not been recognized, he ended by sitting down, or rather, he squatted on his heels in Oriental fashion, and spread out his hands to the heat.[1] But this movement had the effect of bringing his features into the full light. A servant-maid who was crossing the court, was struck with his appearance, and, coming nearer to look at him, she said, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth."[2] Then turning to those around, "This man was also with him," she persisted,[3] to the great annoyance of the Apostle, on whom all eyes were turned. However, he did not altogether lose presence of mind, but, feigning contempt, he merely replied, "Woman, I know him not. I neither know nor understand what thou sayest."[4]

The incident would have ended here, if one of the men near him had not fixed his eyes on Peter's face, which he fancied he recognized, declaring at the same time, "Thou also art one of them." Peter instantly answered, "O man, I am not."[5] Nothing more was said at the moment. Annoyed at these questions, which he knew quite well would result in forcing him into a compromising answer, the unhappy disciple beat a retreat into the vestibule, within the gloomy depths of which he hoped to hide himself.

At that very instant the cock crew for the first time. But the Master's words, "Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice," do not seem to

[1] MARK xiv. 54. "He sat with the servants at the fire, and warmed himself."

[2] Id. xiv. 66–67. "There cometh one of the maid-servants of the high-priest. And when she had seen Peter warming himself." LUKE xxii. 56. "Sitting at the light and had earnestly beheld him."

[3] LUKE xxii. 56.

[4] MARK xiv. 68; LUKE xxii. 57.

[5] LUKE xxii. 58.

have occurred to Peter. No doubt he was too preoccupied with the danger into which he had thrust himself, and with the means of extricating himself from it, to pay attention to the warning which fell upon his ear. He had now reached the second stage of the downward path, when presumption and imprudence are succeeded by trouble and agitation. Not alone is there a pause in the descent, but we are not quite sure but that we ought to turn back; we move about restlessly, dissatisfied with ourselves, suspicious of every one, equally prepared to surrender or to rush into any rash act.

The soul at such a moment is like a traveller lost in a snow-storm, — no longer able to distinguish anything, exhausted in vain efforts to find his whereabouts, overcome with cold and sleep, the certain victim of Death, unless a guide is found to lead him back into the right path. Sometimes, at such a moment, a voice is raised to attract the straying soul; such as the crowing of the cock, the voice of God appealing to conscience. But the voice dies away on the wind. The appeal is drowned by the roar of the tempest, and the traveller slides downwards to the precipice.

Just as Peter reached the inner door of the vestibule, another maid-servant, the portress probably, noticed him, and said to the persons with whom she was chatting, "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth."[1] Immediately he began to swear emphatically that he did not know the man.[2] This was, as Saint Matthew remarks, the second of the denials predicted by our Lord. It assumed greater gravity

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 71. "As he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she said. . . ."

[2] MATTHEW xxvi. 72. "And *again* he denied with an oath: That I know not the man."

from the oath with which it was accompanied. One step more, and unhappy Simon will have arrived at complete apostasy. The step was soon taken.

Finding that place still more dangerous than the one he had just quitted, he retraced his steps towards the brazier, hoping to be lost in the going and coming of the servants and the guards, — a very fair calculation, if we are to judge by the time which elapsed between the maid's exclamation and his next encounter, which resulted in the final denial. About an hour[1] had passed, during which Peter had leisure to reflect on his imprudence. Did he so reflect? Upon this point we are reduced to conjectures, for he has not confided his sentiments to us, neither in the Gospel of Saint Mark nor in his epistles, wherein we should vainly seek for any trace of his uneasiness. However, we think that he felt vexed and humiliated, without exactly realizing in full the gravity of his fault, never wavering in his love for his Master,[2] endeavoring to see Him, to help Him, even to save Him. He was fortified against remorse by the feeling of devotedness which he ever had, as at the Cenacle, when he said, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death!"

It did not occur to him to fly from the midst of all these dangers. Quite the contrary! He wished to remain to redeem his awkwardness, and to recover his self-esteem, and perhaps even the esteem of those people by whom he felt he was despised. How would he set about this? Circumstances would direct him. For the time being, it was sufficient to watch silently the course of events.

[1] Luke xxii. 59. "And after the space, as it were, of one hour."

[2] Saint Leo, speaking of Peter, says, "Vidit in te Dominus, non dilectionem aversam sed constantiam fuisse turbatam." This is also the thought of Saint Bernard and of Saint Thomas Aquinas (*Sum. theol.* 2–2, xxii. art. 12).

Meanwhile, the bystanders continued to talk of Jesus and His adherents. Peter's very reserve caused him to be suspected, and brought the remark on him, "Of a truth this man was also with him, for he is also a Galilæan."[1] This remark was soon on the lips of every one present. "Surely thou art one of them; for thou art also a Galilæan."[2]

In desperation, the Apostle multiplied his denials. "Man," he said to his first assailant, "I know not what thou sayest."[3] He hurled oaths and anathemas at the others then, and uttered that awful denial, "I know not this man of whom you speak."[4] All in vain. "Surely thou also art one of them," they responded, laughing at him, "for even thy speech doth discover thee."[5]

In fact the Galilæan accent was notorious in Palestine, just as, perhaps, the Alsatian accent or that of Auvergne is amongst ourselves. Every one knew it, and turned it into ridicule. By dint of caution, no doubt, Peter had succeeded in softening it, and at first it was not recognized among the various idioms spoken by those around him, Jews, Arabs, Syrians, and others. But excitement brought out his usual intonation, even exaggerating its peculiarity. The more he strove to hide it, the more he betrayed himself. The final blow was dealt by a relative of Malchus, who was in the High Priest's service, "Did I not see thee in the Garden with Him?"[6]

This time, Peter felt the ground giving way beneath his feet. They drew near him with threatening looks, and already hands were stretched forth to seize him. Curses broke from his lips; again he swore that he knew not the man.[7]

[1] Luke xxii. 59. [2] Mark xiv. 70. [3] Luke xxii. 60.
[4] Mark xiv. 71. [5] Matthew xxvi. 73. [6] John xviii. 26.
[7] Matthew xxvi. 74.

He was continuing, when a movement took place in the crowd which set him free. Our Lord Himself had just appeared on the steps, surrounded by guards, about to cross the atrium. The servitors stood aside, and Peter found himself alone, face to face with the Friend whom he had just denied for the third time. Anguish seized him; he felt as if he were choking, and his heart became oppressed. Fortunately Our Lord appeared not to see him. But, all at once, He turned His eyes,[1] and the Apostle felt that glance fall upon him, weighted with reproach, that same tearful look with which the Lord had received the kiss of Judas.

Thus the apostasy of the Prince of the Apostles completed the treason of the Iscariot. It was more painful to the Heart of Him Who was forsaken, for the traitor had never been among the number of the privileged ones, while the Apostle was the first among his Brethren. Behold the result of the Master's tenderness, and the disciple's protestations!

The man whose duty it was to seek for and to collect evidence in his Friend's favor, refused to testify himself for Him. Far more, he had disowned Him; denied Him; cursed Him; and this not before the menacing High Priest, but before talkative maids and scoffing varlets. He denied Him, not once and as if taken by surprise, but thrice, and each time his cowardice and ingratitude became worse. And yet, he had not the excuse of a temptation in which first falls could not have been fore-

[1] LUKE xxii. 61. "And the Lord, turning, looked on Peter." Saint Leo and Saint Augustine here understand a mystic look, an action of divine grace on the soul of Peter. Ludolph the Carthusian (*Vita Jesu Christi*, Part ii. c. lx.) wrongly follows them, as is evident from an attentive perusal of the Gospel narrative in which there is question of a positive look.

seen, because he had been advised to be careful under penalty of a threefold defection.

And now who of the friends of the night before was left to Our Lord? Judas was hiding, whilst waiting for suicide and damnation; the fugitives from Gethsemani were hiding amongst the tombs in the valleys; John, concealed amongst the crowd, dared not lay aside his useless curiosity and proclaim himself; and Peter there before Him had yet on his lips the last imprecation with which he had just insulted Him.

The glance of God made Man, resting fixedly on the Chief of the Twelve, seemed to say to him, "You too! *Tu quoque!*" And in the soul of the guilty re-echoed those words so quickly forgotten. "*Etiamsi omnes, ego non!* Though all . . . I will not."

Peter shuddered at that glance, but not so much with fear as with sadness; for he saw in it so much commiseration that he could not believe that he was condemned forever. The enormity of his fault did not surpass the immensity of Mercy. He felt this, although he had not yet sufficiently come to himself to confess his error and solicit pardon. He was emerging from a nightmare, slowly, divining rather than actually seeing, shattered by the dream, and trembling at the least suspicion of the reality.

All this took place simultaneously, with the rapidity of lightning, and in the midst of the silence of the witnesses of the scene. Without understanding it, they felt they were in the presence of a mystery which filled them with feelings of respect. Suddenly, the cock crew for the second time; and the awakening of the disciple's soul was complete. He saw the prophecy of the previous evening fulfilled. "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice."

It was then indeed true.[1] He had denied his Master, his God, and he was there, face to face with Him, in the midst of those who insulted Him and of the executioners, their accomplice, the most detestable of all because he was the most ungrateful. But his very ingratitude enabled him to measure the depth of the despised love, and seeing that it was measureless, he had but one thought, namely, to shelter himself therein from the justice which he beheld ready to overtake him.[2] Nevertheless — and this was the punishment of his presumption — he was not simple enough to throw himself at the feet, or even on the neck of the Divine Master Whom he had offended. Feeling his heart grow faint, he extended his hands with a look of ardent supplication; then, hiding his face, he rushed to the door, which opened without difficulty before him, and free now to weep at his leisure,[3] he became lost in the abyss of his repentance.[4]

It was about three o'clock in the morning. The dawn would soon break. Unable to bear the sight of man; frightened, perhaps, at the thought that he might meet Mary on her way, he sought shelter in a deep cave where he could weep at will.[5] Would he have done better to join the small number of friends who had gathered round the poor Mother with the

[1] MARK xiv. 72. "And *immediately* the cock crew *again*."

[2] SAINT LEO, *Serm. de Passione*. "Abundavit fletus ubi non deficit affectus: et fons charitatis lavit verba formidinis."

[3] LUKE xxii. 62. "And Peter, going out, wept bitterly."

[4] It is Catherine Emmerich's thought (*Douloureuse Passion*, c. xii.), and really it seems to us a very natural one. A tradition recorded by Fabri (*Evagatorium*, v. 1, p. 266) perfectly agrees with this idea: "Nec poterat Virgini loqui præ verecundia et dolore."

[5] "Cavea profunda . . . ubi Petrus flevit amare." A small church was built on this spot, called *Galli cante* or *in galli cantu*. It was destroyed in the thirteenth century (DE VOGUÉ, *Les églises de la Terre Sainte*, p. 331).

intention of following her to the Prætorium and to Calvary?

Possibly so: but he had had such sad experience of his weakness that he distrusted even his sorrow, or did not think himself worthy of bringing it forward beside Magdalen's tears.

A feeling of still greater delicacy might have stopped him. Would not his presence increase his friends' sorrow, and was it not right for the renegade to wait until they summoned him?[1] However it may be, he did not appear on Calvary. He had not the happiness of receiving His Lord's farewell; of assisting at His Burial; and of supporting Mary's trembling steps as she returned to Jerusalem.[2] We do not meet him again until the Resurrection Morn, when, in company with John, he runs to the Sepulchre at Magdalen's despairing cry, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre; and we know not where they have laid Him."

Some of our readers perhaps, as so many before them have been, will be scandalized at the fall of the Chief of the Apostles, of him who was destined to be the Foundation of the Church,[3] and the Pillar and ground of Truth.[4] Let them hearken and let them understand!

Peter has denied thrice. This triple denial corresponds to the three formulas of the heretics who deny Christ, and who attack Him either in His Divinity, or in His Humanity, or in both at the same time. Those who were the cause of the Apostle's fall

[1] Marie d'Agréda, *La cité mystique*, II part, Book iv. c. 16.

[2] Some, however, have thought the contrary, and show us Peter and John supporting Mary in their arms on her return to her dwelling. But this pious belief does not seem to have sufficient foundation.

[3] Saint Hilary, *In Matth.* xvi. "Felix Ecclesiæ fundamentum."

[4] I Timothy iii. 15.

prefigure three kinds of enemies whom the faithful will have to encounter. The first maid-servant represents the Jewish synagogue; the second, persecuting nations; the men whose arguments and whose jeers provoke the second denial, are the doctors and ministers of the various heresies. Taken together, they represent the society of the impious, and, consequently, the danger which the disciple of Christ must avoid. Besides, it is by a secret dispensation of Providence, as Saint John Chrysostom remarks, that Saint Peter is the first to fall. The remembrance of his fall will teach him to temper with mercy and patience the firmness necessary for the condemnation which it is his duty to pronounce against others. Peter, the Doctor of the Universe, sins and asks pardon in order to give this rule of indulgence to those who have to act as judges. The sacerdotal power has not been confided to angels who, not being sinners themselves, would mercilessly pursue sin in the sinner, but a man, subject to passion, is placed over the others. Finding in them his own infirmities, he will better understand how to compassionate, and to more easily pardon. In this manner, Our Lord, delivered to the insults of men, completed the great work of educating the Apostles.[1]

[1] Louis Veuillot, *Jésus-Christ*, II part, c. viii. Compare Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Leo, Ven. Bede, *in hunc locum*.

CHAPTER V

THE TWO SENTENCES OF THE SANHEDRIM

"Who all condemned him to be guilty of death." — MARK xiv. 64.

ANNAS, therefore, sent Our Lord to the real judge, Caiaphas, who, in virtue of his office, was President of the Great Council, ever since Judea had been reduced to a Roman province. After the exile of Archelaus, in the sixth year of Our Lord, the administration became aristocratic, and the Presidency of the Sanhedrim was entrusted to the High Priests,[1] to the exclusion of the Pharisee decemvirs, to whom it had belonged for half a century.[2] Hillel, the grandfather of Gamaliel, had been the last *Nâci* or *Prince* from the schools. His son Simeon was now only a mere senator, and it is through error that the right to preside over the High Court of Israel is sometimes assigned to Saint Paul's master.[3]

All influence had passed from the opposition party of the Pharisees to the Sadducees, who were in sympathy with Rome and were favored by the Procurators.

The Sanhedrim retained but the shadow of its former power, especially since it had been deprived

[1] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* XVIII. ii. 1–2 and XX. ix. 1.

[2] The TALMUD (*Chagiga*, ii. 2) has preserved for us the list of these couples (*zougoth*) whose names are also given by the *Pirké-Aboth*.

[3] LIGHTFOOT, *Horæ hebraicæ;* COHEN, *The Pharisees;* FOUARD, *Vie de Jésus*, etc., have professed this doctrine, which seems in direct contradiction to the sacred text (see ACTS APOSTLES v. 17, 21, 27, 34, etc.).

of the right of life and death, *jus gladii*. But, for true believers, it still remained the refuge of the national liberty and faith, the living law, the more to be respected that it had more difficulty in manifesting itself and in commanding respect.

Caiaphas, thus invested with the title of *Nâci*, was, as we have said before, seconded by a vice-president, his father-in-law, Annas, who was the real director of the deliberations. Just as we enter with Our Lord into the hall of the Supreme Tribunal, we perceive the High Priest seated, with his legs crossed, on a somewhat raised dais, such as may be seen in the divans of Asia Minor and of Persia.[1] This kind of throne, adorned with carving and inlaid work, was reserved for the High Priest. The other members of the Sanhedrim, even the Pontiffs, sat on the ground in a semicircle, on a step covered with carpets and cushions. The majesty of the Tribunal would lie, especially, in the gravity tempered with mildness of which the Orientals possess the secret. These old men, descended from noble races, illustrious by their office, famous for their knowledge or their wealth, might have been the envy of the Roman Senate itself if only they had not been gathered together by hatred, and were not vowed beforehand to malediction. They appeared in the partial shadow, with their wrinkled brows, their glowing eyes, and their quivering lips, like a vision of ominous gloom in which nothing spoke of justice or of mercy. Instinctively it was felt that these were not judges, but assassins.

In the meantime, Our Lord remained standing in the centre of the hall, His hands bound, His Divine Face black and blue with bruises. Around Him were

[1] The same are to be seen in the great mosques for the use of the Ulemas. The golden throne, preserved in the treasury of the old seraglio at Constantinople, is made on the same model.

gathered the *sopherim*,[1] the satellites, the servitors come out of curiosity, and quite a crowd of people summoned as witnesses.[2] Caiaphas, after having ascertained the presence of all the councillors who had been convoked, opened the sitting without seeming to suspect the illegalities he was guilty of with regard to the proceedings in which he was engaged.

The law forbade trial by night, after the evening sacrifice, on the eve of a festival.[3] It was the middle of the night before the Paschal Feast. Natural equity and positive law[4] alike forbade the accuser to sit among the judges, and, still more so, to preside at the Tribunal; and yet Caiaphas was preparing to preside, the man who had said quite recently, when speaking of Our Lord, "It is expedient that one man should die for the people."[5]

The commonest honesty required that the character of the witnesses should be inquired into, before they were heard, and that those should be set aside of whose veracity there was reason to doubt. The law ordained that the false witness should suffer the punishment which would have been inflicted on the accused, if guilty;[6] and yet the judges themselves had hired false witnesses in such haste that they had not time to train them properly for their disgraceful work. It is unnecessary to add that they took good care to call no witnesses for the defence, although

[1] Law-students of whom we have already spoken. See *Sanhedrim*.

[2] MATTHEW xxvi. 59–60. "And the chief priests, and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death. And they found not, whereas *many false witnesses* had come in."

[3] See MISCHNA, tract *Sanhedrim*, iv. n. 1; TALMUD of Jerusalem, tract *Sanhedrim*, i. folio 19.

[4] DEUTER. xix. 16–17.

[5] JOHN xviii. 14. "Now Caiaphas was he who had given the counsel to the Jews: That it was expedient . . . etc." Compare xi. 49.

[6] DEUTER. xix. 18–21; MISCHNA, tract *Sanhedrim*, iv. n. 5.

the Law provided liberally for the means of doing so, even for the most guilty.[1]

But what did these irregularities matter to Caiaphas and his accomplices? Was not the avowed object of the assembly to deliver Jesus to death? None of those present had the least doubt as to the issue of the trial whether well or ill conducted, whether more or less in accordance with law and justice. At the most, all they need do was to save appearances; but they would see to that later, when it became necessary.

The false witnesses, therefore, came forward and multiplied their accusations, like men who were anxious to earn their wages, but with so much awkwardness that it was impossible to retain any of their accusations.

No doubt Caiaphas was beginning to grow impatient, when two men came whose names tradition has preserved — Hananias and Achazias.[2] Contrary to usage, they were heard together, and not separately, which constituted one more irregularity.[3] Was the oath administered to them, as was right, with the usual caution, "We are not asking you for conjectures or public rumors?"[4] The Gospel allows us so to think. In fact, the new witnesses said, "This man said," and "We heard him,"[5] which would quite satisfy the requirements of the Law. The judges were already rejoicing, they had found the two witnesses required — actual witnesses of the crime[6] —

[1] JOB xix. 7 and 16–17; ISAI. i. 17; DANIEL xiii. 46–48. We find no trace of evidence for the defence, either in the Gospel or in the Talmud.

[2] SEPP, *Vie de Jésus*, ii. p. 393. According to the Rabbinical tradition, to which we are indebted for the names of these "agents and abettors;" "abetting agents," as Dupin says.

[3] DANIEL xiii. 51.

[4] MISCHNA, tract *Sanhedrim*, iv. n. 5.

[5] MATTHEW xxvi. 61; MARK xiv. 58.

[6] As the Mischna requires, tract *Sanhedrim*, iv. n. 5.

who had heard the words which constituted a blasphemy against the Temple — a mortal offence in the eyes of the people of Israel.[1] Suddenly their brows darkened. These two witnesses did not agree, either as to the terms or the sense, as was necessary to render their evidence acceptable.[2]

"This man said," they maintained at first, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and in three days to rebuild it."[3] This, properly speaking, did not constitute an insult to the Holy Place, particularly just when Herod's workmen were completing the rebuilding of the Temple, which had been pulled down by his orders. Therefore, Caiaphas insisted on their repeating their evidence, showing how unimportant it was in its first form. The witnesses began again.

"We heard him say: I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another not made with hands."[4]

By the terms of the Jewish Law the evidence did not agree.[5] According to Maimonide, it should not only agree, but the statements should be identical; so much so, that the Jew accused of adoring the heavenly powers was not judicially guilty, if one witness affirmed that he had seen him honor the sun, whilst another said that he had seen him pay homage to the moon.[6] It was on account of a similar dis-

[1] JEREM. xxvi. 6–19. The Pharisees did not mind it much, when they were disputing with the Sadducees; compare STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 267. But in this case, they were all agreed against Our Lord.

[2] MISCHNA, tract *Sanhedrim*, v. n. 2; Rabbi MAIMONIDE, *Sanhedrim*, xx.; STRAUSS (*Vie de Jésus*, ii. p. 328) vainly tries to prove that they did agree.

[3] MATTHEW xxvi. 61.

[4] MARK xiv. 58.

[5] Id. Ibid. "And their witness did not agree."

[6] MAIMONIDE, *Sanhedrim*, xx.

crepancy that Daniel had Susanna's[1] trial revised, and so saved her life with honor. Now the two statements did not fulfil the required conditions, in spite of a certain resemblance. "I can destroy," differed from "I will destroy." "I will build another temple not made with hands" deviated also from "I can rebuild it in three days." And even if they had accepted the two accusations as being perfectly identical, still they must acknowledge that there was an obscurity about them which rendered them worthless. What was this pretence of rebuilding in three days an edifice at which they were working for forty-six years,[2] and particularly, of not employing human hands? Were they to regard it as a ridiculous boast, or was it rather one of those mystic formulas, the sense of which so often escapes the listeners, but of which the initiated possess the secret. Even before the Disciple whom Jesus loved had given the explanation, by attributing "to the temple of his body"[3] the destruction with which it was thought the Sanctuary of Jehovah was menaced, several had suspected the real meaning, without, however, seeing it quite plainly. In any case, the blasphemy was not proved, and the witnesses' efforts became useless.

To escape from the dilemma in which he found himself, Caiaphas thought of addressing the accused, not minding the fresh irregularity of which he became guilty, by not setting aside insufficient evidence, even if not contradictory.

"Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against thee?"[4]

[1] DANIEL, xiii. 51, and following.

[2] JOHN ii. 20. "Six and forty years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?"

[3] Id. ii. 21. "But he spoke of the temple of his body."

[4] MATTHEW xxvi. 62.

He had risen and descended the steps which separated him from Our Lord,[1] ready, as it seemed, to lay hands on Him. What he felt now was not the cool hatred of the first moments; a mad anger was seething in his soul, and threatened to burst all bounds in spite of him. For the moment, a remnant of shame struggled against the exasperation caused by the folly of his false witnesses, and, above all, by Our Lord's calmness. The Master, in fact, had retired within Himself in silence, and those closed lips frightened the prevaricating judge. If He would speak, a discussion might ensue in which some way would be found to entrap Him. How could he force Him out of this silence?

A diabolical light illuminated the Pontiff's mind. Was not pretension to rebuild the Temple without human aid the veiled assertion of supernatural power? Had not Jesus often employed, in speaking of Himself, strange expressions which veiled the pretence of being equal with God? The ambiguity might be dispelled, the blasphemy laid bare, and the author of it convicted on His own confession. The Law, it is true, forbade such proceedings, by annulling beforehand the confession of the accused, whether it was spontaneous, or obtained by surprise, which entailed the possibility of a capital condemnation.[3]

But was this man an ordinary culprit? Was he not to be regarded as one of those seducers against whom custom permitted artifice to be employed? In a similar case, witnesses could be concealed who would collect the answers skilfully provoked, and then come to demand punishment before the Tri-

[1] MARK xiv. 60. "And the high priest rising up in the midst."

[2] MATTHEW xxvi. 63. "But Jesus held his peace." MARK xiv. 61. "But he held his peace, and answered nothing."

[3] MISCHNA, tract *Sanhedrim*, vi. par. 2; MAIMONIDE, *Sanhedrim*.

bunal which had spread the snare.[1] Caiaphas did not hesitate to rank the Word of God amongst the seducers.

Hatred had effaced the recollection of the Master's miracles, or it had so blinded him that he accepted the explanation of the Pharisees who attributed them to Beelzebub. This sceptical Sadducee clasped hands with the credulous disciples of Hillel; he was prepared to accept anything rather than that Our Lord should be discharged. But there was no longer any reason to fear his discharge, for, by the terms of the Law, the seducer could not be acquitted. The Pontiff's brow grew once more serene. He assumed a majestic attitude, and raising his hand to Heaven, he pronounced the hallowed formula:[2]

"I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God."[3]

And he hypocritically added the traditional ejaculation, "Blessed be His Name!"[4]

The silence of death reigned in the hall. No one thought of remarking the imprudence of Caiaphas. In his eagerness to gratify his hatred, he forgot to measure his words. He did not ask, "Dost thou claim to be?" but "Art thou the Christ, the Son of God?" thus, unconsciously obtaining for us the most striking attestation of the Divinity of His Victim.

"Thou hast said it," answered Jesus in a calm voice, "And you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of Heaven."[5] There was no longer any room

[1] MAIMONIDE, *Sanhedrim*, iv. 5; TALMUD of Jerusalem, tract *Sanhedrim*, xiv. 16, and TALMUD of Babylon, xiv. 43 a.

[2] JOSHUA (vii. 19) calls on Achan to answer with a similar formula, "Give glory to the Lord God of Israel and confess."

[3] MATTHEW xxvi. 63.

[4] MARK xiv. 61.

[5] MATTHEW xxvi. 64; MARK xiv. 62.

for doubt. Jesus had applied to Himself, as the Messiah, the Son of God, the prophecies of David and of Daniel.[1] He was interrupted by furious outcries, "He hath blasphemed," exclaimed the High Priest, at the same time rending his garments; "what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now, you have heard the blasphemy. What think you?"[2] The hateful farce had succeeded. In answer to Caiaphas, all present cried out with one voice, "He is guilty of death!"[3]

Then there ensued an indescribable scene. Bounding from their seats, in accordance with the ordinance of the Rabbis,[4] the councillors rushed towards the accused to strike Him and spit upon Him.

Some took the keffiyeh[5] which covered his head, and rolling it round his face like a veil, cried out ironically, "Prophesy unto us, O Christ; who is he that struck Thee?"[6]

The satellites and the servitors would not be outdone by their masters. They, too, rushed upon Our Lord, overwhelming Him with blows and insults.[7] At a sign from the High Priest, they dragged Him outside and, according to tradition, cast Him into a small building,[8] there to await the daylight, for, after

[1] PSALM cix. 1; DANIEL vii. 13.

[2] MATTHEW xxvi. 65.

[3] Id. xxvi. 66.

[4] See TARGUM DE JONATHAN, *Horayoth*, 3.

[5] In Hebrew, *Sudar*, a flowing head-dress of wool or silk, wound round the head and fastened with a fringe of twisted wool.

[6] MARK xiv. 65. "And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say to him prophesy." MATTHEW xxvi. 68.

[7] MARK xiv. 65. "And the servants struck him with the palms of their hands." LUKE xxii. 63. "And the men that held him, mocked him and struck him . . . and blaspheming many other things they said against him."

[8] It has been converted into a chapel, which is venerated in the Convent of the Armenian schismatics. LIÉVIN, i. p. 223.

all, there was nothing yet which they could make known to the people.

Even the seducer could not be condemned without certain legal forms. They might strictly legalize the ambush at Gethsemani, the nocturnal inquiry, the zeal which had procured the anticipated sentence; but they must beware of a good-natured impulse on the part of the crowd; they had to guard against the objections of certain Zealots, and, consequently, it was necessary to give a more regular appearance to the condemnation. The axiom, "The welfare of the people must be the supreme law: *Salus populi suprema lex esto*," could not always be pleaded with impunity.

The members of the Sanhedrim, who were disposed to put it forward, now began to fear that they had been too hasty, and felt the necessity of moderating their pace. At daybreak, it would be advantageous, necessary even, to resume this homicidal game in order to insure its success.

Meanwhile, they released their prey with regret. Ah! if only the legionaries were not keeping guard in Herod's palace, but a few paces off; if even the Procurator had been at Cesarea instead of being in the Antonia, how strong the temptation would have been to get rid of this troublesome adversary quietly.[1] They could have managed the people. As long as there was no question of Rome's interference in the affair, all would be quite easy. But now, they must not dream of such a thing. The judicial murder of the Galilean might have such far-reaching possibilities that they trembled at the thought, and so resigned themselves to the humilitating necessity.

The fools, the yoke to which they were submitting

[1] The Zealots were capable of such a crime, according to the testimony of the Mischna (*Sanhedrim*, fol. 81–2).

was laid on them by the very Hand of their Victim. The Redeemer willed not that He should die a hidden death, but that it should be a solemn Sacrifice, accomplished in broad daylight, before all the people, according to the prophecies. The hour which He had chosen for their fulfilment had not yet struck. His Divine Will scoffed at their rage and malice. He drank, at His pleasure, slowly, drop by drop, the Chalice presented to Him in the Garden of Olives, whilst He repeated the consent given long since to His Father's Will.[1]

In the meantime Peter was completing the series of his denials. But John, who incurred no danger in the palace of the High Priest, what proof of devotion, what help had he given to the Master? Did he protest against the false witnesses? It would have been so natural for him to make up for the silence of his Lord, to defend Him who did not defend Himself; to try at least to make a diversion: that was his right established by the Law.[2] If he incurred some danger, at least, he need not fear being recognized as the disciple of the Galilæan, for he was known to every one as such. Did he really run any other risk?

It is not for us to answer; and yet it is hard to believe in the courage of the Beloved Disciple. As at Gethsemani, did John only perform part of his duty? Let us not judge him, and let us be satisfied to admire the Divine Champion, who set aside all consolation and all help that He might be alone in the struggle against Sin and Death. It was thus Isaiah beheld Him, when he made Him say, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a

[1] PSALM xxxix. 8; HEBR. x. 5. "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast fitted to me. Then said I: Behold, I come."

[2] JOB xxix. 7, and following; ISAI. i. 17; DANIEL xiii. 46–48.

man with me. *Torcular calcavi solus, et non est vir mecum.*" [1]

As soon as day dawned, that is to say, about six o'clock, at the hour when, according to the Rabbinical ordinances, the Pharisees should recite the prayers of the phylacteries,[2] Caiaphas reascended his tribunal to preside at a fresh meeting intended to give an appearance of greater regularity to the sentence.

This time, if we understand Saint Luke[3] aright, the Assembly removed to the court in which weighty cases were tried, since the Hall Lischat-ha-Gazith, had been abandoned. It was situated in the Lower City, in the shadow of the Sanctuary, so to say, on the road which led from Sion to the Antonia. Hither the Ancients, the Scribes, and the Pharisees dragged the Divine Master Whose trial they were about to recommence.

It appeared, in fact, that the Law was by this means fulfilled. Between the two meetings, there had been an interval which afforded the judges time for reflection and also to confer with each other, two and two. True, the first meeting had taken place at night and in a private dwelling, but the second would be held in broad daylight and in a place consecrated to Justice. They had as an excuse for condemning Him during the time of a Festival, that the Procurator, who alone could pronounce sentence of death, was only making a short sojourn in Jerusalem. They did not wait until after the morning sacrifice, because they did not wish to disturb the solemn function nor to throw a gloom over the people's joy.[4] The flaws in the trial were explained

[1] ISAI. lxiii. 3.

[2] *Berakhoth*, c. i. to iii.

[3] LUKE xxii. 66. "They brought him into their council."

[4] For all these ordinances of the Law with regard to legal proceedings, consult the TALMUD of Jerusalem, and Rabbi MAIMONIDE (tract *Sanhedrim*); MISCHNA, tract *Betza*, v. 2, etc.

by the special character of the criminal, the danger which the public welfare incurred from Him, the inconvenience of delaying the trial and the infliction of the penalty. Our Lord was not only placed beyond the pale of the Law by the Major Excommunication, but He had actually placed Himself outside it by the bravado of His Triumphal Entry. The fact that the people abandoned Him, when called upon to give testimony in His favor, proved that they regarded Him as unworthy of any consideration.[1] Thus reassured, as far as might be, these sinister hypocrites once more arraigned Our Divine Lord.[2] They wanted to give Him an opportunity of repeating His "blasphemy," in order to treat Him as a seducer, without troubling themselves about the other charges, which would only bewilder the people. They went straight to work and put the direct question.

"If thou be the Christ, tell us." A sad disdainful smile played round the Master's lips.

"If I shall tell you," He answered, "you will not believe me." "And if I shall also ask you, you will not answer me, nor let me go."

They had no difficulty in understanding, for the allusion was transparently clear, that He defied them to answer with regard to the distinctive characteristics of the Messiah, and their application to Himself; at the same time that He unmasked their determination to put Him to death. To deprive them of any excuse, either for their own conscience or for posterity, He again uttered this warning, "but hereafter the son of man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God."[3]

[1] TALMUD of Jerusalem, and TALMUD of Babylon (xiv. 16–43 a).

[2] LUKE xxii. 66. "And as soon as it was day, the ancients of the people, and the chief priests, and scribes came together and they brought him . . ."

[3] LUKE xxii. 66–69.

But their ears were closed like the asp deaf to the voice of the charmers.[1] The word of their salvation[2] was never again to reach their souls. Their sole anxiety was to state precisely the reasons for their sentence.

"Art thou then the Son of God?" they again asked.

"You say that I am."

And at once they unanimously agreed. "What need we any further testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from His own mouth."[3] A regular crowd had gathered round the court, attracted by the story of the events of the preceding night, and by the desire of seeing the end.[4] It was mainly composed of Our Lord's enemies, and of those who were indifferent to Him, it being usual in similar cases for the friends to keep back, and not to appear until they felt certain that they were not implicated in the affair. Human nature has ever been thus, and it would be useless to reproach Our Lord's contemporaries with the weaknesses to which we are ourselves subject. But we can lament over the desolation in which Truth and Justice are usually left at those crises which God permits for the glorification of His Providence, and the abasement of our pride. Above all, should we not be lost in thanksgiving for the mercy which effects our salvation without us and, so to say, in spite of us?

The presence of the multitude had this advantage, that it prevented a repetition of the more shameful illegalities committed at the preceding meeting. In private, with closed doors, amongst themselves, the members of the Sanhedrim had counterfeited the supreme tribunal, and declared the accused worthy

[1] PSALM lvii. 5. [2] LUKE v. 17; ACT xiii. 26.
[3] LUKE xxii. 70–71.
[4] Id. xxiii. 1. "The whole *multitude* of them."

of death. But now, at a public meeting, this game could no longer be played. The reality presented itself. Rome reserved to herself the right of life and death, which her representative exercised, that suspicious Procurator, who had come the evening before, expressly to maintain order during the festival of the Pasch. From the terrace of the palace, Caiaphas could see the glittering lances of the legionaries on the platform of the Antonia, a disagreeable sight, yet a wholesome one, which somewhat tempered the enthusiasm of his hatred against the Galilæan.

Then the crowd was to be feared. Not only might Our Lord's friends be in it, but also some of those fanatical upholders of the formalities who would regard the sentence of death as null and void because it was pronounced outside the Lischat-ha-Gazith, for such was the Rabbinical teaching.[1] In any case, it was important not to emphasize the humiliation of Israel by a useless sentence which would recall to her the fact that her Supreme Court had no longer the right of life and death, unless it pleased Rome to concede it to her.

Hence the formula, "Guilty of death" was not repeated. Evidently it was an understood thing, but, in fine, appearances were saved. The Procurator could not complain of an infringement of his rights, and the people need not fear that they would be insulted. Their consciences were now at ease. True, the murder remained to be consummated; but they had long ago declared that it was necessary for their own interests, even for those of the nation, and, besides, the responsibility for it would fall on those who were officially the cause.

[1] TALMUD of Babylon, tract *Of Idolatry* (*Abboda-Zara*) i., fol. 8. MAIMONIDE, tract *Sanhedrim*, xiv.

They had the same sentiment now with regard to Pilate which he later on expressed in words to themselves, "Look you to it."[1] Let Pilate look to it himself. And while they were preparing to lead their victim to the Prætorium, they exchanged with one another sly smiles which, could the haughty Roman have seen, would have aroused his ire, and caused him to swell with indignation.

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 24.

CHAPTER VI

JUDAS

"He chose twelve of them (whom he also named Apostles). Simon. . . and Judas Iscariot who was the traitor." — LUKE vi. 13–16.

"He was a thief." — JOHN xii. 6.

"It were better for him, if that man had not been born." — MARK xiv. 21.

THE sun was rising rapidly in a clear, cloudless sky, one of those April mornings unknown in our foggy climes where there is nothing to give us an idea of that transparent atmosphere, of that soft radiance.[1] At that hour of the morning the sun is not yet the conqueror from whose arrows there is no escape.[2] He is the Bridegroom of the Psalmist, who comes forth from his bridal chamber, refreshed and smiling,[3] his hands full of perfume,[4] which he scatters over the earth.

A fresh breeze swept over the corn, already ripe, and through the trees, clothed once more with verdant foliage, while mingled with the rustling of the tremulous stir it created, were the thousand sounds of returning day: the songs of birds, the murmuring of

[1] It is the fine season in Palestine, and it is difficult to understand why Catherine Emmerich says so much about the rain and mud in connection with Our Lord's Passion. In April, the rain has ceased, and dust has replaced the mud.

[2] PSALM xviii. 7. "And there is no one that can hide himself from his heat."

[3] Id. xviii. 6. "As a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber."

[4] CANTIC. v. 14. "His hands are full of hyacinths."

fountains, the lowing of herds, the calls of the herdsmen and of the travellers. Under the cedars of the Mount of Olives, along the slopes of Scopus, and on the uplands of Gareb, pilgrims were leaving their tents and proceeding to the traditional ablutions, before resuming their journey to the Temple. In the enclosures on the hill-tops, where the sun's first rays penetrated, the priests were preparing for the morning sacrifice, surrounded by the most devoted servants of Jehovah: those who anticipated the dawn at the gates of the Holy Place. There were but few yet abroad. Peace reigned everywhere, a peace well adapted to raise the soul to its Creator; a silence full of tenderness and of expansion, — a delightful preparation for that Feast beyond all others, the Pasch which commemorated the deliverance of Israel.

Meanwhile a man was ascending the steps leading to the inner court. His gait was tottering, his head bowed, as if beneath the overwhelming weight of immense sorrow. His hands, hidden in the folds of his mantle, were clenched, as if in rage, and broken words escaped his lips. When he crossed the threshold of the great Gate of Bronze, he perceived, close to the Sanctuary, the High Priests who had come to the Temple, no doubt through the Tyropœon Arch, which would shorten the road leading to the Antonia. Were they merely crossing the Sacred Enclosure so as to avoid a fatiguing walk through the city, or compromising manifestations on the part of the crowd? Or was it not quite as much because they wanted to let the people see how careful they were to place their righteousness under the safeguard of Piety by participating in the morning Sacrifice before seeking an interview with the Procurator? Their scepticism as Sadducees did not forbid this hypocrisy, which also cloaked a concession to the pious crotchets of

the Pharisees, their allies for the time being against their common enemy.

Be this as it may, the new-comer met them at the Gates of the Sanctuary, — the Hieron, — beyond which there was nothing but the Holy of Holies. With a rapid step he advanced to them, raising his head, and stretching forth his arms. A glance sufficed for his recognition, — it was Judas, the traitor, and his hand held the thirty pieces of silver, the price of his treason.

"I have sinned," he said in a hoarse voice, "in betraying innocent blood."[1]

A sneer was the only response.

"What is that to us? Look thou to it." And they turned their backs to him in contempt.

And this is what he had gained by his crime. The men to whose passions he had ministered had thrown him that contemptible sum of thirty pieces of silver for his trouble. They considered their debt paid, and, while they profited by his crime, they left the entire responsibility for it on him. He was quite at liberty to feel remorse, if such was his fancy; it was his affair, with which they had no concern.[2]

The poor wretch could not believe his eyes or ears. For one moment he remained overwhelmed by the contempt of his accomplices, in the mad expectation of some kind impulse on their part. Were they to have no part in the sadness, the shame, the terror, which he was feeling at the thought of his crime? This innocent blood in which they had trafficked, would it not speak to them like that of Abel?[3] Should he alone suffer Cain's remorse? They were

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 4.

[2] LUDOLPH, the Carthusian, *Vita Jesu Christi*, vol. IV. part ii. p. 53, col. 1st, has perfectly expressed the sentiments of the Jews in this matter. We have but to translate.

[3] HEBR. xii. 24. "To the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than that of Abel."

in the Temple of the True God, between the Altar of Holocausts and the veil of the Sanctuary. Would their conscience be silent in such a place and at such an hour? Did they then no longer believe in Jehovah? And did not their unbelief, at the same time, forbid him to have faith in Infinite Mercy?

And whilst he was writhing in this agony, they were slowly retiring, with no more thought of him than if he had never existed. Intense irritation seized him; violently flinging down the price of the shameful bargain on the mosaic pavement, with a sudden start, he rushed towards the flight of steps leading to the Valley of Cedron.[1] The jingling of the coins caused the Priests to look round. They saw the Traitor rush by them like lightning. But so little concern had they for his fate, that they scarcely paused. Henceforth he was useless to them, and, consequently, they were indifferent to him.

We could do like them, and leave this damned soul forever in oblivion. Has not the Master said that it were better for him had he never been born?[2] Yet, let us bring him forth from the shade for our instruction; for after Peter's fall and his repentance, it is good for us to study the fall of Judas and his repentance. For that this unhappy man repented[3] is testified by the Gospel itself, although, on the same page, we read the story of his death in despair.

When Our Lord, in the second year of His public life, chose from amongst His disciples twelve preachers of the new doctrine,[4] the twelfth chosen was Judas,

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 5. "And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed."

[2] MARK xiv. 21.

[3] MATTHEW xxvii. 3. "Judas . . . *repenting* himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver."

[4] LUKE vi. 13. "He chose twelve . . . and Judas Iscariot who was the traitor."

son of Simon, a native of Kerioth, a little ruined town of Judea to the south of Hebron on the borders of Idumea.[1]

The Divine Master, in the very beginning of His ministry,[2] had borne the Word of the Gospel to the south of Judea and the centre of Idumea.

Here He made proselytes who followed Him on His return to the north, and of whom several attached themselves to Him. The son of Simon was one of these latter. It was not long until his zeal and his earnestness brought him into notice, so that on the day of the election he was appointed a place in the Apostolic College, where he represented the Jewish element. Might it not be said that a mysterious irony governed this choice? The only Jew raised to the rank of an Apostle, the last chosen, as if for mercy's sake, was to be forever the type of the man who values money more than conscience and honor, but who still makes pretensions to philanthropy and to patriotism.

Judas was, in fact, the financier of our Lord's retinue, if we may so speak; his aptitude for the management of money had caused his brethren to entrust him with the purse[3] from which our Lord drew to provide for His disciples and for the poor. The taste for order and economy was not the only one he acquired in his office. His accounts, cleverly arranged, concealed the substraction of money for his own benefit, and before Saint Luke called him a traitor, he had merited from Saint John the name of thief.[4] However, he played his game successfully for

[1] At the present time, Kuryetein or Garyetein, in the region of the Arabes ed Djekalin. JOSHUA xv. 25, makes mention of it.

[2] MARK iii. 8. "A great multitude followed him from Galilee and Judea . . . and from Idumea."

[3] JOHN xii. 6. "*Having the purse*, carried the things that were put therein."

[4] Id. xii. 6. "He was a *thief*."

a long time, even up to the last, with the Apostles who were not so clear-sighted as Saint John, the more so that he was spared, through Our Lord's mercy, the shame of being discovered, though He may have reprimanded him in private, that is, if we are warranted by the silence of the Gospel in making this supposition.

But at the same time that he was stealing, he affected charity to the poor.[1] He was not the first who practised this kind of cleverness; and he was not to retain the secret in his own keeping. In all ages (our own is no exception) those philanthropists have existed who trade on love for the lowly and the needy. Judas had no opportunity to exercise his talent on a large scale; but, judging by what he did within the narrow limits of his field of action, he would not have been out of place in the company of the most famous impostors on public credulity. The Gospel has preserved one trait characteristic of this deceitful nature.

Some days before His Passion, the Divine Master, when at Bethany, accepted an invitation from Simon the Pharisee, whom He had cured of the awful disease of leprosy.[2] The Apostles were at the feast as well as Lazarus raised from the dead. Martha was serving, and Magdalen, as was her wont, remained somewhat apart, silently listening to our Lord's last words. Towards the end of the repast, the illustrious penitent came forward, carrying an alabaster vase, and leaning over Our Lord, anointed His Divine Head with precious perfume.[3] Somewhat surprised, the disciples manifested their feelings in unkind words.

[1] JOHN xii. 4, xiii. 29.

[2] MARK xiv. 3. "And when he was in Bethania in the house of Simon the leper, and was at meat. . . ." Sepp (ii. 313) supposes that Simon's house was a hospital for lepers; but it is more probable that Simon was a leper whom Our Lord had healed, as Le Camus thinks (iii. 28, n. 1).

[3] Id. xiv. 3. "An alabaster box of ointment of precious spikenard."

"To what purpose this waste?" they said.[1]

Judas hastened to outdo them. "What is the use of this waste?" he exclaimed, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?"[2]

Upon which John makes the following remark. "Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein."[3] None the less, the traitor's words had their effect, and Saint Matthew, who was present, testifies that the greater number of the Apostles approved of them, in very indignant terms. Our Lord was obliged to interfere in order to command silence, and to console Magdalen.

"Why do you trouble this woman?" He said, "for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor you have always with you, but me, you have not always. For she, in pouring this ointment upon my body, hath done it for my burial. Amen, I say to you that wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memory of her."[4]

It was a severe rebuke, and exasperated Judas so much that he decided to betray his Master. At least, Saint Matthew insinuates as much when, having related Our Lord's reprimand, he proceeds at once to tell us of the dealings of Judas with the Sanhedrim.

It was the drop which caused the cup to overflow. For a long time the miserable man's faith had been weakened, if, indeed, it were not dead from the time

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 8. "And the disciples, seeing it, had indignation, saying: To what purpose is this waste?"

[2] JOHN xii. 4.

[3] Id. xii. 6.

[4] MATTHEW xxvi. 10–13; MARK xiv. 6–9; JOHN xii. 7–8.

Our Lord announced, in the desert, His intention to institute the Blessed Eucharist. Saint John, in fact, numbers him amongst the unbelievers known to Our Lord with a special note pointing out his treachery, beforehand.[1]

Perhaps, even, he never had faith in the Messiah as he was foretold by the Scriptures, that is, as the Saviour of Souls, as the Founder of the Spiritual Kingdom of God, the King who only crowns His elect in Heaven.

Like many others, he had expected the establishment of an earthly kingdom in which the faithful of the longest standing would, very naturally, be given the first places with special honors and enjoyments. That there would be a struggle to carry out this programme, he had not the least doubt, but he relied on the Master's genius, the attraction of His words, and the people's enthusiasm to shorten the duration of the struggle, and to assure victory. Now, the multitudes had been excited by the new teaching to the extent of offering the Teacher a kingdom which He would not accept.[2] The years had slipped by without any decisive effort, bearing away with them in their flight the hour which had seemed so propitious. And thus the enemies of the Prophet were inspired with confidence and audacity. Would the lost opportunity ever be regained? He might be permitted to doubt it, and the hopes founded on the triumph of the Gospel became more and more doubtful.

He had, nevertheless, persisted with the obstinacy peculiar to the Jewish race, clinging to every allusion made by the Divine Master to His Eternal Kingdom.

[1] JOHN vi. 65. "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was, that would betray him."

[2] JOHN vi. 15. "Jesus therefore when he knew that they would come to take him by force and make him king, he fled again into the mountain himself alone."

Whatever the end might be, Judas could not help admiring the Innovator, and he joined willingly with the envoys of the Sanhedrim, in saying, "Never did man speak like this man."[1]

On the day of the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, as long as the acclamations of the crowd and the ovation given to Our Lord lasted, he regarded success as certain. But, in the evening when the Master with His disciples again took the road to Bethany, with nothing to presage a to-morrow for that day's brilliant fortune, he began to distrust a man so ill-advised. Above all, when he heard Him prophesying His Passion and His Death, he had certain proof that it was a lost cause, and that the best thing to do was to withdraw as quickly as possible from all relations with the vanquished.

Treason was germinating in the deserter's heart. From the moment that there was no longer anything to be gained in Our Lord's service, it was natural to seek to profit by His impending ruin. Moreover, it was an excellent way to assure for himself an amnesty from the conquerors, men of very vindictive memory, who would be quite capable of attacking the disciples after they had disposed of their Master.

It would be a clever thing to place himself at their disposal before the hour of definite triumph, even to co-operate with them in hastening this hour, in return for a reward which might be considerable.

Had these thoughts already haunted the mind of Judas? We cannot tell, but, in any case, they rapidly took shape in the days that followed the feast at Bethany. The following Tuesday, when night came, he pretended to remain in Jerusalem about some business, and whilst the Apostles were ascending the

[1] John vii. 46.

slopes of the Mount of Olives, he descended the declivities of Sion and took the road to Bethlehem.

On the top of the hill which faces Ophel was a country-house belonging to Caiaphas, where he had that evening convoked in extraordinary meeting the priests, the Scribes and the Ancients, for the purpose of deciding the fate of Jesus. How did Judas know the hour and the place of this secret meeting?

It is quite reasonable to think that he had already had communications with the High Priest's servants, or perhaps even with Caiaphas himself, and that he had an appointment in this retired place at an hour when he would not be likely to meet any one.

However that may be, he contrived to gain admittance, and, without any preamble, addressed the members of the Sanhedrim. "What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?"[1] This was a somewhat bold speech to a legally constituted body.

But the wretch felt he was the equal of such judges, and he treated them with scant respect. However the step which he was about to take was an irretrievable fault on his side. Whatever might be the answer of the Sanhedrim, he had gone too far to turn back. The High Priests understood this well. As Judas belonged to them irrevocably, they did not consider it worth their while to treat him generously. They offered him thirty pieces of silver,[2] or thirty shekels (about five pounds, English money). That was what a slave was usually considered to be worth.[3]

The pride of the Pharisees would not allow them

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 15.

[2] Id. xxvi. 16. "But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver."

[3] EXODUS xxi. 32. "If he assault a bond-man or bond-woman, he shall give thirty sicles of silver to their master."

to estimate Our Lord at a higher price. We are not told that Judas tried to obtain more.[1]

Six centuries before, the prophet Zacharias had foretold this bargain made by the Sanhedrim with Judas. "They weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver,"[2] he makes the Lord say when disputing with the Jews. But in the prophet's thought it was not the price of a slave, it was the wages of the terrible artisan who said to those who opposed him, "If it be good in your eyes, bring hither my wages; and if not be quiet."[3] Unconsciously, the wretched man rendered testimony to the Divine Workman; His work was good and defied all contradiction. As for the price, of what consequence was the amount to Him? Disdaining their appreciation, and their liberality, He might well be satisfied with the most moderate wages, even were it but what was paid for the labor of a slave.

Judas took the thirty shekels, consecrated money which dated back to the Maccabees, and which had nothing in common with that which bore Cæsar's effigy.[4]

The Pharisees would not, for the whole world, make use of that profane money, except to pay the tribute to the Emperor. Their scruples appeared everywhere in the course of the plot against Our

[1] Le Camus, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.*, iii. 154.

[2] Zachar. xi. 12.

[3] Id. xi. 12.

[4] Farrar (*Life of Christ*, p. 371) says on this point, "With the gloating eyes of that avarice which was his besetting sin, he might gaze on the silver coins, stamped (oh, strange irony of history!) on one side with an olive-branch, the symbol of peace, on the other with a censer, the type of prayer, and bearing on them the superscription, 'Jerusalem *The Holy*.' In fact, the shekels and half shekels of Simon Maccabæus bore on one side a flowering branch, on the other a perfume vase. Round the branch are the words, '*Jerusalem The Holy*,' around the vase, '*Shekel of Israel*.'" Several specimens may be seen in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.

Lord. More than ever they strained at the gnat[1] of which He spoke to them in mockery, but swallowed the legendary camel without having the least suspicion thereof.

Once the traitor had departed, they resumed their homicidal work, whilst their ally retired pondering how to deliver the Victim into their hands.[2] We have seen how he gained his thirty pieces of silver. After the ambush at Gethsemani, everything points to the conclusion that he also went to the High Priest's palace to see what course matters were going to take. Probably he still cherished a secret hope of some brilliant stroke on the Master's part, or of some clever defence which would place Him beyond the reach of an attack. Perhaps he was reckoning on a popular movement, some hesitation of the Sanhedrim, an unforeseen accident, such as those expect, without knowing wherefore, who involve themselves in difficulties out of which there is no escape.

None of these things occurring, he lost his head, overwhelmed by the weight of his responsibility, and in the first place, took the resolution to return the money, as if when he had rejected the wages he would be the less guilty of treason. In this conviction, he ran to the Temple, where he hoped to find the members of the Sanhedrim, at the hour of the first prayer, and, as we have seen, dashed himself to pieces against their contempt. In his flight, the miserable man did not perceive that he was again taking the road which led to the villa of Caiaphas. He crossed the valley and ascended the opposite de-

[1] MATTHEW xxiii. 24. "Who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

[2] Id. xxvi. 16. "And from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray him."

clivity to the height of about sixty feet, towards a wooded plateau where the roads met which ran round the side of the hill.[1] Here he must have paused, breathless and exhausted, and, with a rapid glance, once more scanned the scenes of his crime. There below, in the depths of the valley of Cedron, was Gethsemani, where he had betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss; to his left, on Mount Sion, the palace of Caiaphas, the walls of which still echoed the cry, "He is guilty of death!" before him, the Temple, where all hope of repairing his fault had just been extinguished. He turned his head, and there before his eyes, illumined by the rays of the sun, were the terraces of the Pontiff's villa in which the fearful bargain had been concluded. He sank down, no longer able to resist the impulse which was urging him to death. Earth rejected him. How would he dare appeal to Heaven? Then, removing his girdle, he fastened it to a tree, and hung himself.[2] His weight caused the branch to break, and the corpse fell face downwards, and the broken flints scattered amongst the stones, or perhaps the broken branch itself, pierced his body, and all his bowels gushed forth.[3] Such was the end of this wretched creature, of whom his Master said it were better for him that he had never been born, for nothingness knows neither reproach nor remorse.

The crime of Judas remains for us an impenetrable mystery. He had followed Our Lord from His first preaching of His Divine Mission, and he was chosen[4] one of the Apostles of the Gospel. Thus he had

[1] Tradition places the spot where Judas committed suicide between Zachary's tomb and the village of Siloam (LIÉVIN, *Guide*, i. p. 299). Haceldama was bought with the price of the treason, but there is nothing to show that Judas died or was buried there.

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 5. "Went and hanged himself."

[3] ACT i. 18. "And being hanged, burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."

[4] MATTHEW x. 1–4; JOHN vi. 71, xv. 16.

begun in good-will and continued in honor. Why did he not persevere to the end?

We cannot admit that grace was withdrawn from him at the time when Saint John shows him to us, predisposed to treachery by his unbelief.[1] He did not make use of it, that is clear, he abused it, even to the extent of despising it, perhaps. But Our Lord suffered him to remain with Him, treating him with familiarity, surrounding him with mercy and tenderness, soliciting him with that gentle importunity with which He pursues certain souls who are dearest to His Sacred Heart, such as those of the Twelve must have been. Why was he not caught and drawn, in spite of himself, into the way of repentance and amendment?

On the contrary, we see him descend obstinately into the abyss. At the moment of the Last Supper, he must have known that Our Lord was cognizant of the compact with the Jews. The very fact that it was to Peter and to John that he confided the preparation for the Pasch, instead of to him, as was His wont, must have enlightened him. If he had had any illusion on the subject, it must certainly have been dispelled when, after the emotion caused by the announcement of the approaching treason, he had dared to put the question, "Is it I, Rabbi?" and had received the answer, "Thou hast said it."[2] No doubt, he alone heard, for Our Lord had spoken in low tones, but the next moment, when he was taking the bread which Our Lord held out to him, he noticed John looking fixedly at him, and confessed to himself that he could not much longer hide his crime and his disgrace. Consequently the warnings, so full of kind-

[1] JOHN vi. 65. See above.

[2] MATTHEW xxvi. 25. See, for the whole of this scene, JOHN xiii. 18–30.

ness and prudence, which afforded him an opportunity to acknowledge his error, ought to have stopped him, if they did not reclaim him. Yet when he left the Supper Room, pursued by that veiled reproach, "That which thou dost, do quickly,"[1] there is nothing to show that he had opened his heart to a salutary emotion. In the Garden of Olives the words, "Friend, whereto art thou come? Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" produced, perhaps, a momentary effect upon him. It was impossible that it could be otherwise. But it quickly passed; the lightning flash is not so rapid, and the darkness grew blacker than ever in that soul henceforth impervious to the light.

Yet the Gospel says that he repented.[2] Alas! his repentance was but the tardy consciousness of the enormity of his crime. Tacitus, in his Annals, speaks of this consciousness regarding an accomplished crime. "*Perfecto demum scelere, magnitudo ejus intellecta est.*"[3] And Saint John Chrysostom says of it with truth, "The cleverness of the devil consists in preventing man from suspecting the gravity of the sin before it is definitely committed, lest repentance should turn him away from it; but once the fault is committed, he allows the guilty one to feel its full gravity, in order to drive him to despair."[4] Judas justified this observation in anticipation. Whilst Peter, weeping, rushed from the Palace of Caiaphas, he fled, dry-eyed, from the Porch of Israel. Both had betrayed their Friend and Master, and it seemed as if they must resemble each other in sorrow, as they did in their fault. But what a difference! The tears of the first flowed less from his eyes than from his

[1] JOHN xiii. 27.
[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 3. "Repenting himself."
[3] TACITUS, *Annal.* xiv. 10.
[4] SAINT JOHN CHRYSOST. *Homil. LXXXV in Matth.*

heart — broken yet trusting — because he knew the mercy of the Divine Master whom he had offended, and trusted to it in all humility. The sobs of the second rent a breast swollen with shame and rage, — shame for a crime which he dared not confess even to himself, rage in which he would have annihilated men because he hated them, and God because he feared Him.

The Holy Spirit has pronounced the only words about Judas which really throw a light on this darkness. "This apostleship from which Judas hath by transgression fallen, that he might go to his own place."[1] Three distinct periods: The call of God, which makes an Apostle; growing infidelity, which makes a transgressor; the supreme treason, which makes a reprobate. The thought of that "place" to which the traitor has gone, causes us to shudder, especially when we think of "the throne on which he was to sit,"[2] like his Brethren of the Apostolic College, "to judge the tribes of Israel."

At the very moment in which he was preparing to commit suicide, the priests were deliberating as to the use of the money he had left in the Sanctuary. According to the law of Moses, it was not allowable to put into the Corban the price of an illegal act.[3] Hence the delicate consciences of the Pharisees would not allow them to put into the sacred treasury the wages which they themselves had allotted to Judas.

"It is not lawful," they said, "to put them into the corbona; because it is the price of blood."[4] Truly these people fill us with horror, and Judas, in comparison, is less to be detested. Repentance was impossible to these demon-souls. Would we not be

[1] ACT i. 25.

[2] MATTHEW xix. 28. "You also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

[3] DEUTER. xxiii. 18.

[4] MATTHEW xxvii. 6.

tempted to doubt justice, if we saw them relying on mercy?

They took care beforehand to stifle the cry of the dying Saviour, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and justly did Saint Stephen invoke on their heads the Blood of the Just, of whom they had been the betrayers and murderers.[1]

Deferring to some other time their decision as to the use of this accursed money, Caiaphas and his accomplices hastened to meet their Victim, who was being led to the Antonia to be delivered to the Procurator, who would dispose of Him at his discretion. The gloomy cortège, when it left the Court, crossed Acra by the great road which ran along the Temple, and began to ascend towards the Fortress.[2] According as it advanced, it was increased by the crowd of Jews and strangers who had come to Jerusalem for the Pasch, — a crowd as yet very quiet, owing to the astonishment caused by such a mysterious event. Where would all this end? Thus the people were following with anxious curiosity, when the members of the Sanhedrim appeared in the Square of the Antonia, and took the lead of the procession.

Some moments before, the Roman sentries had signalled the excitement which they noticed in the adjacent streets, and when the cortège reached the Antonia, Pilate's soldiers were drawn up in battle-array under the arched gates of the citadel, ready to suppress by force all attempt at sedition. But this time there was no question of revolt. Never had Cæsar had more docile subjects, nor the Procurator clients more eager to recognize his authority.

[1] Act vii. 32.

[2] See first chapter for a description of Jerusalem in the time of Our Lord. From the Temple access was had to the Forum which preceded the Antonia, by one of the eastern gates.

FOURTH BOOK

IN THE ANTONIA

CHAPTER I

PILATE AND THE PRÆTORIUM

"Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's hall. . . . And they went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled."—JOHN xviii. 28.

AT the northeast angle of the Temple arose, more as a menace than a protection, the citadel which the first Herod had dedicated to Mark Antony (according to a custom recently introduced into Asia) and which for this reason bore the name of the Antonia Tower.[1]

The rocky hill on which it was built had been fortified long before by David, afterwards by the Maccabees[2] who had made of it a kind of palace known to the ancients by the name of Bireh, and afterwards Baris[3] when the fashion of Greek appellations became common in Palestine. The Pontiff-Kings of the Asmonean race preserved therein the vestments

[1] "*Turris Antonia.*" TACITUS, *Hist.* book v. c. ix.; JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* V. v. 8. See *Appendix*, letter C.

[2] Simon Maccabees established himself there in the year 141 B. C. Twenty years later, John Hircanus constructed the citadel of Bireh. JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.* V. v. 1.

[3] In Greek, "βάρις," *a little bark.* This name may have come from Egypt, where it was applied *to the arks or sacred coffers.* Stapfer (*La Palestine*, etc., p. 64) derives it from the Persian word *Birah, a fortress.*

worn by the High Priest on solemn festival days — the purple robe, the tiara, and pectoral cross adorned with precious stones. It was, at that time, a sort of casket of bronze and marble where, safe from all attack, the insignia of Royalty and of the Priesthood, the outward signs of the independence and the religion of Israel were securely guarded.

Baris had not saved the Temple from Pompey's insults. Herod himself, in his struggle against Antigonus, had proof of the insufficiency of these fortifications of a bygone age. Hence, when he wanted to rebuild the House of the Lord, he felt the necessity of adding fresh strength to the ancient palace of the Maccabees, and of making it more in keeping with the progress of the art of war. Therefore he had the sides of the hill excavated perpendicularly, and then cased them with polished marble, to render any attempt to scale them impossible.[1] He thus obtained a quadrilateral three hundred and fifty feet long on each side, and about eighty-seven feet in height, which he furnished at the top with a parapet five feet high to shelter those defending the round-way. On the platform outlined by this first wall — a few paces back — rose the citadel properly so-called, formed by four square towers thirty-five feet wide and eighty-seven feet high, joined by curtains which they considerably exceeded and protected against a surprise. The two towers on the south served as a support to the exterior galleries of the Temple, one on the east, the other on the west. The latter seems to have replaced the ancient tower called Straton, which communicated with the Porch of the Gentiles by a sub-

[1] Thirty-one years before Jesus Christ. The platform of the Antonia was partly natural, partly artificial. Herod increased its area by earth-works on the Bezetha side, that is to say, towards the north. It is quite easy, at the present time, to trace the arrangement of the place exactly.

terranean passage in which Antigonus was killed by order of his brother, the first Aristobulus.[1] The other was surmounted by a turret thirty-five feet high, whence a view was had of the very interior of the Sanctuary, very much to the Priests' displeasure, who however did not dare to protest against this audacity.[2] This turret had been of use to the Romans, and they would take good care not to change such a useful arrangement.

Herod, following the examples of the Maccabees, excavated a subterranean passage which crossed the enclosure from north to east and ended at the Gate of the Temple,[3] the Golden Gate of which he made a place of refuge by fortifying it, as may still be seen.

The development of the city to the north on the hill of Bezetha, which was higher than the platform of Baris, inspired the Idumean Prince with the idea of excavating a deep fosse at the foot of the fortress, which would help to lengthen the pools lining the northern wall of the Temple. Therefore, the Antonia was only accessible from the west, and need not even fear a surprise on that side, defended as it was by the rampart of the second enclosure, joined at right angles to the left side of the entrance to the citadel[4] or rather to the Forum, by which it was preceded.

It was not long before experience proved that Herod's engineers very well understood their busi-

[1] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* I. iii. 13. This subterranean passage is distinct from that which was opened by Herod. A violent combat took place in it at the time of the taking of the exterior Temple by the soldiers of Titus.

[2] The platform of this turret was about 200 feet above the pavement of the Temple.

[3] JOSEPH., *Antiq.* XV. xi. 7. The Eastern Gate is mentioned in EZEKIEL xi. 1. It is probably the *Beautiful Gate*, "Θύρα Ὡραία," of the ACTS APOSTLES iii. 2.

[4] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* V. iv. 2. See *Appendix*, letter G.

ness.[1] After having provided for the protection of the Holy Place, and for the safety of his own person, he next thought of rendering this intrenched camp a pleasant place of residence. Galleries connected the towers, at the foot of which rose a palace enriched with all that the genius of the Greeks could add to the refinements of Oriental luxury. Fountains of flowing water maintained a perpetual freshness in the courts paved with mosaic, and groves of rare trees mingled their shade with that of the porticos, the taste for which Herod had acquired in his travels in Greece and in Italy. It was, indeed, widely different from the austere abode of the Maccabees, as widely different as the liberator of Israel was from the bloodthirsty valet of Augustus. Josephus, with all a courtier's politeness, has sketched for us the picture of this splendor, which so soon palled on its creator.[2]

Just as the descendants of John Hircanus had disdained Baris, and transported their residence to a palace built south of the Temple, on the slope opposite Mount Sion, so Herod, before long, quitted the Antonia to establish himself in the City of David, under cover of the impregnable towers which he called by the names dearest to his heart,—Mariamne, the adored wife, who yet was strangled by his order; Phasælus, the brother, whose death he so cruelly revenged; Hippicus, the friend of the days of his adversity, taken away before he could testify his gratitude. What this new residence, so celebrated, was like, is not within our province to tell. Our Lord did not condescend to enter it, and we have enough to do to seek His traces in the places honored by His Divine Presence.

[1] The Forum of the Antonia, however, weakened its defence, as events proved on several occasions.

[2] Joseph., *Bell. Jud.* V. v. 8.

But He spent the last hours of His mortal Life in, and gave, so to say, His last looks to the haughty Guardian of the Temple, whose description we have not yet completed.

In front of the rock hewn by his architects, Herod had constructed an atrium, the proportions of which nearly equalled those of the upper platform. It was, as far as we can conjecture, rectangular, surrounded with porticos, to which access was had by a wide road paved with white stones. The principal entrance was on the west, under a triple arcade, the model of which is frequently met with among the ancients, with slight differences, which depend on the local genius. A great arch, semicircular, flanked by two arches of lesser height, led to a court paved with reddish flag-stones, which the Gospel designates by the name of *lithostrotos*, and which is found at the present day, almost intact, under the subsoil of the convent at Sion.[1] The Porches of the Temple were embellished in this manner, and Josephus gives their decoration the same name as the Gospel applies to those of the Prætorium.[2]

At the end of the court, a double staircase of marble gave access to the galleries which rose above the porches, and by these to the platform of the Antonia, in such a way that from the balustrade of the round-way the view extended over the galleries, the court itself, and the *amorce* of the exterior road, visible through the triple arcade of the entrance.

At the time Palestine was reduced to a Roman province, after the downfall of Archelaus[3] the Procurators took possession of the fortress, and henceforth a part of the garrison holding Jerusalem resided

[1] See letter C of the *Appendix*.
[2] Joseph., *Bell. Jud.* V. i. 8; John xix. 13.
[3] In the year 7 of the common era.

there. An entire cohort took up its quarters therein at the Paschal time, as a precaution against the disturbances which might take place amongst the crowd, gathered from all parts of the world, and often animated by feelings hostile to Rome and her representatives.

The platform was brought into direct communication with the roofs of the porticos, which it overlooked, by means of steps, and from the Eastern Porch could be seen the sentinels who were charged with looking after the good order of the city.[1] The Great Court of the Antonia, in the language of the conquerors called the Prætorium,[2] had been provided with a corps of guards who at the same time protected the approaches to the citadel and the adjacent gate of the Temple.

The supposed entrance is still shown, placed formerly at the top of a staircase, of which mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles.[3] The populace sometimes attacked this post when the number of its defenders was not sufficiently large to make it formidable. It was established in the right wing of the buildings of the Prætorium, for the use of the auxiliary troops, making up the effective force of the second legion cantoned in Cæsarea. A body of cavalry was also quartered in the dependencies of this court, as may be inferred from the Acts, to which we are indebted for the most of this information. Although the name of Prætorium did not necessarily imply the idea of a tribunal,[4] still the atrium of the Antonia was the usual place in which

[1] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* V. xv. 8.

[2] "Φρούριον." JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* II. xvii. 7; CHAMPAGNY, *Rome et la Judée*, i. 197.

[3] ACTS APOSTLES xxi. 35 and 40.

[4] PAULY, *Real Encyclopædie* v. *Prætorium*.

the Procurators gave their judgments. When occasion required, the Roman Magistrate had the movable tribune of wood set up, which was known by the Greek name of Bema,[1] from the top of which he pronounced sentence, seated in the *sella*, a kind of folding-chair, which must not be confounded with the curule chair.[2] In the Procurator's absence, the tribune who commanded the garrison of the Antonia, also pronounced, but without any ostentation, sentence there against the disturbers of public peace in the Temple and its environs.[3] Criminals[4] were even scourged there, and the half pillar which was used at these executions was permanently fixed, facing the guards at the north side of the Court.[5]

The Procurator's private residence was in the upper enceinte, sheltered by the fortifications raised by Herod. It was only a temporary abode, to be used at the time of great festivals, when the superintendence of the Temple required them to be in the immediate vicinity. Whenever the Prefects of Syria or the Governors of Palestine wished to stay longer in the Holy City, they preferred to settle themselves in Herod's new palace, the magnificence of which far surpassed that of the Antonia. Several amongst them liked residing there; but Pilate, who disliked the Jews, especially those of Jerusalem, made rare and short visits to the capital of Judea. Further, when he was obliged to go there, he kept away, or rather, he shunned the insults which, with good reason, he feared he might receive, and the revolts which his

[1] "Βῆμα." JOHN xix. 13, RICH, v. *Pulpitum*.
[2] RICH, v. *Sella*.
[3] ACTS APOSTLES xxi. 33, and following.
[4] Id. xxii. 24.
[5] And not in a retired place, outside the Prætorium, as several have thought, contrary to the proofs furnished by the places and by tradition.

abruptness seemed always ready to provoke. For this reason, the Antonia suited him better as a residence, and it is there that we find him on the morning when he is called upon to pronounce the fate of the Son of God.

But before he comes upon the scene, it is well for us to have some knowledge of the man as far as contemporary documents will allow us. Neither profane history nor tradition afford us many details of his private life, but the Gospels throw a vivid light on the character and the prejudices of the most famous of the Governors of Judea.

Pontius Pilate (Pontius Pilatus) was a Roman knight belonging to a race of soldiers rendered illustrious by the General, Caius Pontius, famous in the annals of the Republic.[1] He married Claudia Procta, who, it is said, was born at Narbonne, and who, it is believed, was the issue of a family enfranchised by a member of the Claudii, if indeed she was not herself related to that patrician race which had come into the Empire with Tiberius.[2] The favor which the wife enjoyed personally with Cæsar was reflected on the husband, as is proved by Pilate's nomination to the post of Procurator of Judea, in the room of Valerius Gratus, in the twelfth year of Tiberius, and the twenty-fifth of Jesus Christ.[3]

He was the sixth representative of Rome in Palestine from the fall of Archelaus; but the power entrusted to him far surpassed that of his predecessors. He was no longer a mere overseer of the lands belonging to the Emperor, a collector of the revenues which they might produce. Nor was he any

[1] SMITH, *Dictionary*, see *Pilate*; SUETONIUS, *Tiberius and Nero*. See *Appendix*, letter D.

[2] NICEPHORUS, *Hist. Eccl.* i. 30; SEPP, *Vie de Jésus-Christ*, iii. 417.

[3] JOSEPH., *Antiq.* XVIII. ii. 2.

longer an inferior magistrate almost entirely dependent on the Syrian legate. He was a sort of viceroy commanding the military forces, supreme judge in capital causes, as well as administrator of the Treasury. He had jurisdiction and the *imperium merum*, the same as "Cæsar's lieutenants" in Mauritania, Rhetia, Noricum, and Thrace.[1]

Did he lose his head at finding himself raised to such great power, or did his natural inclinations drive him to inconsiderate and violent measures? It is difficult to answer. But it is certain that he began his government badly, and that as he went on he become worse, that is, if we attach any importance to Josephus and Philo, two witnesses, it is true, whom we cannot accept unreservedly. One of his first acts was to send a larger garrison to Jerusalem, a measure which he seems to have regarded as a compliment to the cleverness of the Jews. In fact Cæsarea Maritima,[2] the headquarters of the Procurators, was the hated rival of the Holy City from the day of its foundation by the first of the Herods. By sending several cohorts to Jerusalem instead of one, Pilate seems to have wished to increase its importance and to lessen, in the same degree, that of Cæsarea. But he spoiled his good intentions by an inconceivably awkward act.

The Roman cohort, numbering three maniples, that is to say, six hundred men, marched under standards which, until then, great care had been taken to prevent being seen in Palestine. Each maniple or com-

[1] Diodorus Cassius, *Historiar.*, Book liv. 13–15; Renan (*Vie de Jésus*, 398) is mistaken as to the nature of Pilate's authority, which he wrongly compares to that of the fiscal procurators of whom we have spoken. Pauly, *Réal Encyclopædie*, see *Procuratores cum jure gladii*; Milman, *History of the Jews*, Book xii.; J. Ayre, *Treasury*, v. *Procurator*.

[2] *Cæsarea Maritima*, which must not be confounded with Cesarea Philippi, situated to the north of Palestine.

pany gathered round its *manipule*, a lance adorned with medallions wreathed with garlands in the centre of which was the Emperor's image. The lance terminated in an open hand, in remembrance of the handful of grass which was the primitive rallying sign in the Roman armies. The cohort had a special standard, which differed but little from the *manipule*, and also bore images to which the soldiers offered sacrifices and libations. The Eagle, appropriated by the legion, was never taken from headquarters, unless when carried beside the Chief Commander, the first Tribune, the prefect or legate, in military expeditions.[1]

The Jews had never seen the Roman eagles until Pompey besieged their capital, a century before the time of which we are writing. As to the other ensigns, from the time of Archelaus they had been carefully hidden from the people, who regarded them as idols, and were indignant at the thought that they should be allowed to profane the land consecrated to the God of Israel. From the time the troops touched the soil of Palestine, they had been concealed, even in the barracks, where they were not hung up, as was usual in the Roman camps.

Pilate wanted to overcome this repugnance by a stroke of ingenious audacity. The troops which he sent to garrison the Antonia and the Castle of David entered the city at night, and the darkness prevented the *manipules* being seen, surrounded as they were by a forest of lances. But the following day, the

[1] RICH, *Dictionary* for *Aquila*, *Manipulus*, *Lignum*, etc. The soldiers really regarded the eagle as a divinity, as TACITUS testifies, *Annal.* ii. 17, "Aves (aquilæ) propria legionum Numina." VIOLLET-LE-DUC (*Dictionary*, vol. vi. p. 364, and following) substitutes the *centurie* for the *maniple* with a centurion for leader, and a dragon as the standard. Rich's opinion is preferable, as being better authenticated — founded on documentary evidence.

Jews beheld them fixed to the walls of the two citadels, defying Jehovah, over Whose Temple, it might be said, they were casting their shadow. A deputation, composed of a number of influential persons, at once set out for Cæsarea to request from the governor that the standards might be withdrawn and their national customs respected. He answered their demand by threatening them with death, which had not the least effect upon them, and of which he himself in the end understood the ridiculous absurdity. Therefore the accursed standards were once more shut up in their cases; but the remembrance of these attempts remained fresh in the minds of the members of the Sanhedrim and of the people.[1]

Besides, Pilate soon revived it by another act, quite as awkward. He caused to be hung upon the walls of his palace, golden shields which he dedicated to the genius of Tiberius, thus assimilating them to religious objects, like the *anciles* which the priests of Mars carried through the streets of Rome on the days consecrated to their divinity.

He could claim that he was following the example of Herod who had placed a golden eagle on the principal Gate of the Temple in honor of Augustus. This last attempt succeeded no better than the first. The Jews laid their complaint before Tiberius, who decided in their favor and administered a rebuke to the indiscreet Procurator.[2] It was now his turn to bear malice. His opportunity came soon after, on the occasion of a measure, excellent in itself, and of which, no doubt, the people would have approved, if it had not provoked a sacrilegious attempt.

The Aqueduct of Etham, constructed a thousand years before by Solomon, was in urgent need of re-

[1] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* II. xiv. 1.
[2] Id. xiv. 4; PHILO, *Ad Caium*, xvi. 12.

pairs, for which money was needed. Pilate wanted to secure as quickly as possible the water-supply which was endangered by the ruinous state of the aqueduct, and could think of no better plan than to lay hands on the treasury of the Temple, that famous Corban, the sacredness of which we know from the Gospel.[1] He did not conceal from himself the resistance which he would have to encounter, and to get the upper hand, he conceived the idea of sending disguised solders, armed with sticks, to mingle with the crowd and to fall upon the rebels at a signal from their leader.

The collision took place; men were killed; there was a fearful riot, after which the people held aloof from the Romans, sullenly calm, but waiting the hour of vengeance with that patience which distinguishes the Orientals.[2]

We seem to obtain a clearer idea of Pilate's character from these facts, than from the allegations which Philo causes Agrippa to make.[3] Haughty by nature, and by the prejudices of birth, of education, and of position, he undertook things without reckoning the difficulties, and persisted in them obstinately because of those very difficulties. He crushed the weak, put himself under the necessity of yielding to the strong, which he did with a bad grace, and always reserving to himself the right to revenge what he called his compromised dignity. Was he deficient in intelligence, in acquired knowledge, in prudence, or in experience? By no means. But his intelligence was nervous and impetuous; his knowledge was confused and contradictory; his prudence was vacillating; his

[1] MATTHEW xxiii. 16. "He that shall swear by the gold of the temple, is a debtor." Id. xv. 5, and MARK vii. 2.

[2] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.* II. xiv. 2.

[3] PHILO, *Ad Caium*, xvi. 92.

experience taught him rather to suspect than to decide. His whole character was incomplete and barren; the temperament of an unhappy man who suffers and makes every one else suffer. Such men should never have control, not alone of the interests of the people, nor even of those of simple individuals. In private life they are to be feared. In public life, it is rare that they are not detested.

We can understand the reproach which Philo addresses to him,[1] of being arrogant and tyrannical, of having given arbitrary judgments, of having even held innocent blood cheap; but he could not prevent him from being regarded as an honest man, at a time when similar defects were to be found everywhere without the corrective qualities of which Pilate gave proof.

His first impulses, as the evidence of history and of the Gospel alike prove, were generous and disinterested. No matter what Philo says, and here Josephus does not support his charges, he was not venal. The money taken from the Corban did not go into his own pocket, and if he could have been bribed, the Jews would not have hesitated to do so in many instances where it would have suited them. They had given abundant proof, and later, gave it still more abundantly, that they knew how to conciliate ill-disposed but corrupt Procurators.

There was in Pilate more of the soldier and patrician than of the diplomat and the administrator. He had too much contempt for Asiatics, the Jews in particular, like every good Roman, not to commit the faults we have named, yet he had sufficient esteem for religion and humanity to make a more correct application of these principles than the Jews were capable of themselves. Coptic tradition declares that

[1] *Ad Caium*, place quoted.

he ended his life in penance, and the practice of Christian virtue.[1] There is nothing in any of the foregoing details to render this unlikely. He was one of those pagans who would be the more easily enlightened and converted by the Gospel, because he had no prejudice against the truth.[2]

But whilst waiting for the supernatural light to shine upon him, he was amongst the number of those who serve the world for their own advantage. Proud of the Imperial favor, ambitious as became one for whom the future held all possibilities, he scorned the passions and intrigues by which he was surrounded. Pilate was indeed the man required for the position in which we find him, at least, as it was understood by his period. Cæsar wanted honest lieutenants, before all, to govern his provinces, men who would in nowise deprive him of any of his precious resources. He cared little about anything else.[3] It was the Procurators' business not to compromise themselves in their master's eyes, that is, if they valued their good fortune. Provided their honesty was irreproachable, the revenues correctly paid into the Treasury, and tranquillity insured as a guarantee for the payment of the tax, there was but little fear of being compromised, no matter what were the complaints of those whom they governed. Even under Tiberius, especially at such a distance as separated Palestine from Capri, with ordinary prudence, it was easy enough to remain Cæsar's friend.

Pilate could indeed claim that distinction. The

[1] See the Apocryphal *Acts* of Pilate. The tradition relating to the Procurator's conversion is at present disputed by a great number of critics.

[2] Such is what we gather from the Gospel narrative of the Passion. For Pilate's character, see STAPFER, *La Palestine au temps de Jésus-Christ*, pp. 80–81.

[3] G. BOISSIER, *L'opposition sous les Césars*, pp. 19–23.

unpleasant incidents of which we have spoken, did not lessen his credit; at the very most, it was but an excess of zeal, which he had, moreover, sufficiently retrieved. For eight years he maintained himself in a position which none of his predecessors had occupied but for the briefest space of time, and he hoped to retain it until he should be called by Imperial favor to some distinguished office as a reward for his services in Palestine. Fortune was smiling on him when, without the least warning, the storm burst over his head. The admonition of the centurion of the guard which informed him of the presence of the members of the Sanhedrim at the gate of the Antonia, was the thunder-clap in which he might have recognized the ruin of his hopes.

But, like all those whom the thunder-bolt strikes, he was not quite conscious of the danger he was incurring, the extent of which he could not measure. He knew almost nothing about this tiresome affair; no doubt it was some quarrel in which his authority would be brought into conflict with the remnant of judicial power left to the Sanhedrim. He saw plainly enough, matters would not be settled without trouble; already there was some disturbance which might easily develop into a riot, and, according to all appearances, he would have to draw the sword. But if the threat did not suffice, the first show of force would put an end to the meeting. The centurion waited in silence. The Procurator gave the order for the Prisoner and His escort to be brought into the atrium, whither he himself would descend without delay.

He could not be ignorant of Our Lord's apprehension, for his detectives must have brought him an account of it, as well as of the excitement caused by the two sittings of the Great Council. But there was

nothing surprising in these incidents to any one living in the midst of that irritable and suspicious people. The arrest had taken place without any reference to him, probably because the matter at first sight seemed outside his jurisdiction, otherwise his officers would have brought the criminal directly to him, and he had already settled the nature of the accusations which he would have to discuss. He had known for a long time the hatred of the Sanhedrim for Our Lord, and also their desire to get hold of Him by some secret manœuvre for which they would not have to answer before his tribunal. Therefore, he expected violent invectives against the famous Rabbi, passionate, perhaps even unreasonable, demands, which he must partly satisfy, however unwilling. But he would make no concessions beyond what he thought fit, provided, be it well understood, that there was no possibility of pardoning the Prisoner by some expedient which might suggest itself during the course of events.

He was anxious, but he felt no fear. His precautions were taken; he had decided on his course of action. And as he descended the marble steps, he cast a satisfied glance at the cohort drawn up in correct file before the porticos, and at the brilliant group of the tribunes and the centurions of his staff. He was proud of himself and of his position. In him was embodied all Rome's venerable majesty and her irresistible authority.

CHAPTER II

FIRST INTERVIEW WITH PILATE

"And Pilate asked him, saying: Art thou the King of the Jews? . . . And Pilate said to the chief priests and to the multitude: I find no cause in this man." — LUKE xxiii. 3-4.

"I find no cause in him." — JOHN xviii. 38.

THE Procurator had given orders that the High Priests, the Scribes, and the Ancients should be brought into the Court paved with red marble,[1] in the centre of which arose the Bema, the official seat of the Magistrate whose office it was to administer Justice. But they refused to cross the threshold of the Antonia, to avoid contracting, as they said, the lawful defilement which was the result of an Israelite's entrance into a Pagan dwelling. The Law, in fact, forbade frequenting the company of the Gentiles,[2] but in the doctrine of the Pharisees, this prohibition was formulated with particular rigor.[3]

Now, as the Pasch was to be eaten that very evening, the faithful observers of the *Mischna* wished to preserve themselves in perfect purity.[4] "Impious

[1] The *Lithostrotos*, spoken of by SAINT JOHN (xix. 13) and by JOSEPHUS (*Bell. Jud.* VI. i. 8). This marble, or rather red stone, is peculiar to the geology of Palestine.

[2] JOB i. 12; ACTS APOSTLES x. 28, etc.; MATTHEW xviii. 17.

[3] *Talmud* (*Eroubin*, lxii. 2). "A Pagan's house shall be in your eyes as the abode of an animal." MAIMONIDE, *Pesachim*, vi. 1. According to the TALMUD of Babylon (*Sanhedrim*, fol. 12), the dust of a pagan land was defilement.

[4] JOHN xviii. 28. "They went not into the hall that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the Pasch."

blindness" exclaims Saint Augustine. "The contact of a stranger would have defiled those whom their own crime did not defile! They were afraid of the Prætorium of an infidel judge, they who were not afraid to shed the Blood of their Innocent Brother!"[1]

Pilate no longer took offence at Jewish whims, especially when there was question of conciliating the Heads of the Law and of Religion.[2] Therefore, he crossed the square slowly, saluting the troops drawn up on his way, then passing through the vestibule covered over by the great Entrance Arch, he advanced to the threshold, as far as the place where the Jews were waiting.[3] With a cold glance, he surveyed the crowd, now become silent. In the foreground, he saw the Man whom they had brought to him, His Hands bound, and a chain round His neck, according to tradition,[4] pale but calm, with an air of sorrowful Majesty which touched him.

He had known Our Lord for a long time through the reports of his agents, and, perhaps, also, through the accusations of the Sanhedrim; their hatred of the young Prophet was known to him,[5] and even before he had heard them, he guessed what they were going to demand of him. Besides, it is to be supposed that they sent a messenger before them to solicit an audience with the Procurator, and to advise him of the cause in which he was to interfere. His contempt for them could scarcely be greater, and meanwhile

[1] SAINT AUGUSTINE, *In Joannem, loc. cit.*

[2] WILH. GOES, *Pilatus Judex.* He justly remarks the obligation imposed on the Procurators to treat the great people in their provinces with respect.

[3] JOHN xviii. 29. "Pilate, therefore, went out to them." — FILLION.

[4] LUDOLPH, *Vita Jesu Christi*, II part, c. lx. "Dicitur catena in collo ejus posita."

[5] MATTHEW xxvii. 18. "For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up."

their thirst for blood was increasing.[1] He need not deceive himself; they wanted to force his hand by presenting to him for ratification a sentence already passed. The cords which bound the Captive told the tale, which was made even plainer by the whole surrounding of the demonstration. The crowd had been stirred up to make resistance impossible, for the Procurator's refusal might result in the people's disaffection, and lead to a collision, the consequences of which might prove disastrous.

The Roman's pride, in accord with his conscience, would not allow him to submit to such compulsion. Without hesitation, he assumed the part assigned to him by the law of the Empire. By bringing this Prisoner to him, they officially recognized his supreme authority, his right to take up the case from the beginning with the greater care, the more serious the punishment demanded. "No one must be condemned without a discussion on the cause," and "A criminal cannot be condemned until he has been accused,"[2] were the axioms to which the Romans adhered, both for and against every one.

Their magistrates rarely failed in this duty, whatever their moral worth might be otherwise. Under Tiberius, in particular, respect for these formalities, which protected the accused, was enforced with relentless rigor.[3] Pilate, therefore, must act according to his instructions, even if his honor and his dignity had not suggested to him the only course to pursue.

[1] It is quite useless to place on his lips the singular words which Catherine Emmerich attributes to him (*Douloureuse Passion*, xvii.). It is easy to divine the Procurator's impressions, and this intemperate language adds nothing to the knowledge which we have.

[2] "Ne quis indicta causa condemnetur." "Nocens, nisi accusatus fuerit condemnari non potest."

[3] G. Boissier, *L'opposition sous les Césars*.

"What accusation bring you against this man?"[1] he gravely asked.

The question took the Jews unawares.[2] According to their ideas, the Procurator should not delay over the preliminaries of the trial, but should approve of all they had done, and get rid of a fatiguing and wearisome matter by legalizing the sentence they had pronounced against Our Lord. The only question they had foreseen was, "What punishment have you inflicted on this man?"

Pilate was indeed searching very far back. They were quite nonplussed, and felt that their victim was very nearly snatched from them. If they alleged the pretended blasphemy, they ran the danger of being nonsuited by this Roman who scorned their doctrinal subtleties,[3] as they were to experience before long. They had no other plausible accusation to make, for they had still to reckon with the people, to whom they had represented Our Lord as a blasphemer and a seducer worthy of death, according to the Mosaic Law. For this reason, they faced the difficulty boldly and answered:

"If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee."[4] Pilate divined their embarrassment, and, offended at their arrogance, he replied in a sneering tone: —

"Take him you and judge him according to your Law."[5]

[1] JOHN xviii. 29.

[2] It was not only a correct question, but one imposed by the judicial forms of the Romans. W. GOES, *Pilatus Judex*, p. 27.

[3] And no doubt would be disposed to answer as Gallio the Proconsul of Achaia did: "If they be questions of word and names, and of your Law, look you to it; I will not be judge of such things." ACTS xviii. 15.

[4] JOHN xviii. 30. κακοποιός or κακοῦποιῶν, according to Tischendorf.

[5] Id. xviii. 31. Gallio's conclusion also: "And he drove them from the judgment seat." ACTS APOSTLES xviii. 16.

The Procurator's seeming graciousness, in reality, rendered the whole proceeding null and void. They could not begin the trial again now before the festival, and perhaps it would be only after long delay that they could do so at all, — a delay which would be favorable to the accused, and ruinous to their plans. Besides, even if they could act at once, the result would be the same: their victim would escape death, for they could only inflict on him the punishment of scourging or of banishment.[1]

Their evil genius inspired them. The Galilean had proclaimed Himself Christ: that is, the King of Israel, and if the Romans were indifferent to His claims of Divinity, they would, at least, be uneasy at His pretensions to royalty.

But, in their eagerness to prefer their charge in that form, they spoiled the effect of it by a ridiculous insinuation.

"It is not lawful for us to put any one to death,"[2] they rejoined angrily. "We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He is Christ the King."[3]

Pilate knew how much he could rely on this statement about the excitement caused by Our Lord's preaching. To declare before him that the Prophet had forbidden the payment of tribute to Cæsar was so perfectly absurd that he must have shrugged his shoulders.[4] There remained the title of Christ the King, of which he understood the importance in the

[1] As the consequence of the Major Excommunication.

[2] JOHN xviii. 31.

[3] LUKE xxiii. 2.

[4] Goes (*Pilatus Judex*, p. 7) justly remarks that it was ridiculous and insulting to Pilate for the Jews to pretend to give the Procurator information about the intrigues of their prisoner, when he must have known all about them, if there had been such.

eyes of the Jews, and which he would be obliged to inquire into in a more or less summary manner. He made a sign. The centurion of the outer guard went down with some men and brought back the Prisoner to the atrium, which Pilate himself had just entered.[1]

A moment after, and Our Lord and Pilate found themselves face to face, probably in one of the halls of the Antonia, comparatively alone,[2] — a fact which necessarily invested the examination with all the appearance of kindly commiseration.

Pilate, it is true, as Procurator, had not, his right of *jus gladii* notwithstanding, the privileges of the Prætors whose place at the preliminaries of the trials over which they presided was taken by a questor. He was obliged to examine the criminals himself, in the presence of a clerk or secretary, who summed up the reports of the proceedings, wrote out, and afterwards read the sentence.

Did he even summon the clerk? There is no evidence on the point. One thing is certain, however; he did not give a thought to the witnesses which the Sanhedrim could produce. He wanted to come into direct communication with Our Lord. He felt the influence of that sublime calmness, in which he recognized somewhat of superhuman; and the title of Christ, with its mysterious prerogatives, excited in him a curiosity mingled with sympathy. His whole demeanor reveals a man not at all inclined to pay any attention to the hatred which seethed around the

[1] JOHN xviii. 33. "Pilate, therefore, went into the hall again, and called Jesus."

[2] It cannot be inferred from the Gospel that there were any witnesses, at this moment, around Our Lord and Pilate, except the officers absolutely required, and usually only one clerk assisted the Procurator, and here again, there was nothing to render his presence obligatory.

Accused,[1] — a very different personage from the one sketched for us by Josephus and Philo.

As soon as the Master stood before him, Pilate put the question, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" This question, although quite natural, should have been put in another form. In the eyes of Tiberius, and of his representative, Our Lord's culpability lay quite as much in his pretensions to the title of King, as in the actual assumption of royalty itself.

Pilate, therefore, would have been correct in asking, "Dost thou really claim to be King of the Jews?"

But the admiration for the Prisoner with which he was already filled, would not permit him to charge Him with unfounded pretensions; He seemed to Pilate to be incapable of dreams of pride, such as none but vulgar minds indulge in, and still less so of those frauds, disgraceful alike to the inventors and their accomplices. He had, therefore, only one question to put to him; the very one of which the Gospel has preserved the form, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"[2]

With a searching glance, Our Lord seemed to sound the depths of the Procurator's soul.

"Sayest thou this thing of thyself or have others told it thee of me?"[3]

Pilate must have been greatly surprised to find that his thoughts had been divined, but it did not suit him to show his surprise. Therefore he abruptly changed his first tactics and tried another course.

"Am I a Jew?" he answered, evading a direct reply. "Thy own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee up to me: what hast Thou done?"[4]

[1] PAULY, *Real Encyclopædie*. See *Procurator*, and *Quaestor*.
[2] JOHN xviii. 33.
[3] Id. xviii. 34.
[4] Id. xviii. 35.

Perhaps, at that moment, a wan smile passed over the Master's lips, at the sight of the embarrassment with which Pilate was struggling. The Procurator's self-love had drawn him into an answer very unworthy of his intellect or of his office. He perceived this, and he could not get rid of his first impression as to the royalty imputed to Our Lord, of which he felt His accusers had not a correct idea. How could he resume that first course which he had too quickly abandoned, without compromising his dignity?

Our Lord had compassion on him, "My kingdom," said He, returning to the real question, "is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from hence."[1] The meaning was clear. If He were a king, even in the ordinary sense of the word, He would have had adherents attached to Him by the ties of interest or of expectation, and bound to defend Him at the point of the sword, as had recently happened in the case of the last of the Asmoneans, the Herods, and Judas the Galilæan. Now, no one could reproach Him with having raised a band or an army for the purpose of maintaining or of claiming His rights. Therefore this royalty had a special character which placed it beyond and above all royalty known to the world. Pilate at first affected not to grasp this conclusion, but only to see the title claimed by our Lord.

"Art Thou a king then?"

"Thou sayest that I am a king."[2]

Christ unhesitatingly declared His Royalty, but He wished to do more, and to refute the silly objection urged as an obstacle to His Reign in the present day. His Royalty does not depend either on heredity or

[1] John xviii. 36. [2] Id. xviii. 37.

election, the two forms of popular assent. It exists independently of the Will of Man or of his consent.

"For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth;"[1] that is to say, to create adherents for Himself; to form a people for Himself of whom He is the Eternal King, because He is Himself the Truth, the *Way* by which it may be reached; the *Life* which it creates and preserves.[2]

"Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice,"[3] consequently, is of My people and My kingdom. Thus I form for Myself here below a kingdom which owes not its origin to men, in the sense that the Truth does not depend on them, either for itself or its revelation, — but which is constituted by them, and lasts through them, in the sense that they render here on earth homage to the Truth, and receive from it the blessings of which it is the source even on earth.

"Now," it is true, — in this hour, in which I am in your hands through My people's fault, my Kingdom is not from hence. "*Nunc autem regnum meum non est hinc.*" But I am none the less the legitimate King of souls, all of whom I call upon to recognize and to practise Truth.

"The Truth," murmured Pilate, musingly, "What is truth?"[4] Then he rose and went out, disturbed by this strange discourse in which light seemed to be mingled with darkness in a confusion which he could not succeed in clearing.

Truth! Where could it be found amidst all the contradictions which shocked him? At Rome, he had been brought up in the worship of the countless gods of paganism, and had honored them with his belief

[1] JOHN xviii. 37.
[2] Id. xiv. 6. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."
[3] Id. xviii. 37. [4] Id. xviii. 38.

and his service, until he was old enough to be affected by the scepticism of the philosophers and the littérateurs.

In Palestine he had heard the One only God spoken of, not only by the doctors of Israel, but also by the people of his suite; by his wife, who, it was said, was one of the proselytes. His reason inclined to this new faith, but still with a certain repugnance which was too well justified by the miserable passions of the servants of Jehovah.

How could he persuade himself to the same belief as these dishonorable Priests, these narrow-minded Scribes, these hypocrite Pharisees; this people willing to bear any slavery? The contempt for the Jews with which Cicero had inspired him,[1] even before he dreamed of living amongst them, had been increased by the experience of his eight years of government at Cæsarea and at Jerusalem.

Truth should produce virtue. Could the Jewish doctrine, which was powerless to produce *men*, claim to formulate truth?[2]

True, at that moment, he was in the presence of a man who realized the ideal of virility. He felt this instinctively without needing a longer examination. And this Jew, the only one whom he could esteem, was in contradiction with the priests and doctors of his nation — in such flagrant and complete contradiction that they had delivered Him into his hands, as guilty of heresy and schism, and were demanding His death in order to deliver the people from seduction and error. Was He, amongst them all, alone right, and did Truth speak by His lips? Perhaps! But in that case, what would be the fate of Truth amongst

[1] CICERO, *De Prov. Cons.* 5. "Judæis et Syris nationibus natis servituti."

[2] WILH. GOES, *Pilatus Judex*, p. 86.

men, since the chief of its apostles was about to succumb to the attacks of those whom He tried to convince? What would remain to Him to-morrow of His generous delusions? No doubt, another would arise who would offer to restless humanity rest in truth. Would it be the same with him? Where was the use of troubling himself with a problem that could not be solved. It were better, if possible, to snatch from death the sublime Seer whose life had been remitted into his hands. For the rest, he would see later, provided that there was any occasion for returning to the subject afterwards.[1]

How many men have, like Pilate, passed through this hour of anguish! Sincere minds, desirous of the truth, asking it in good faith, from all around them, no doubt hindered by prejudice, but whose natural virtues and honorable actions have prepared them to believe, and yet they never reach the shore, repelled by the folly and the wretchedness of those who claim to be the incarnation of the doctrine and the practice of Truth. How many also, more courageous and ready to go on, are discouraged by the scandalous indifference of believers, by their compromises of all kinds with vice and error, by their levity of word and act. How are they to decide in the presence of these contradictions and this apostasy? They go away, like Pilate, charmed with virtue, and determined to defend it, but repeating sadly, "Where is truth?" The Procurator slowly went down again towards the Jews. Amidst the silence of death, he pronounced with distinct utterance these words, "I find no cause in him."[2]

To describe the stupefaction of the Sanhedrim

[1] Bacon was wrong in regarding Pilate's words as a jest, one very hard to understand. Charles I. of England, when in captivity, during his meditations made the following anagram, *Quid est veritas?* and found the answer, "*Est vir qui adest.*" Pilate anticipated him.

[2] JOHN xviii. 38.

would be impossible. The earth gave way beneath their feet, and they did not recover self-possession for a little time. However, their bewilderment did not last long. They soon regained their assurance, and multiplied their protests, while repeating their grievances. The crowd echoed their sentiments. The yells rose with increasing force to the Procurator, whilst Our Lord came back, still guarded by the centurion, to hear the decree which should set Him at liberty.

On seeing Him, the complaints of the priests and the cries of the multitude redoubled.[1] Appeals to the justice of Rome were mingled with invectives against the Accused, whose silence excited Pilate's astonishment.[2] He tried to induce Him to break it by the semblance of a fresh examination.

"Answerest thou nothing? behold, in how many things they accuse thee."

It was in vain. To His judge's great admiration, our Divine Lord did not open His lips.[3] He opposed to the fury of His enemies the most profound calm, as if it all concerned a stranger in whom He did not take the least interest. But this very calmness increased the hatred of the Sanhedrim, determined, as they were, to overthrow their enemy, no matter what were the means they employed for the purpose.

Pilate followed, with anxious curiosity, the progress of this animosity, asking himself how he would be able to get out of the adventure without compromising his authority, and belying justice. He saw no issue except a violent one, and yet he was averse to have recourse to such, after his past experience.

[1] LUKE xxiii. 5. "But they were more earnest, saying: He stirreth up the people."

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 12. "And when he was accused by the chief priests and ancients, he answered nothing."

[3] MARK xv. 4.

All at once, his clouded brow became serene. Evidently, a favorable divinity was watching over him and compelling the Jews themselves to provide him with the solution of the difficulty.

In the midst of the yells, he caught a word, quite enough for him who could understand. "He stirreth up the people," cried the Sanhedrim, "teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place." [1]

Pilate at once, with an imperious gesture, commanded silence, and made inquiries as to the country of the Accused.[2] He must have known, but it was necessary to ask, in order to give due weight to his decision. A Roman magistrate knew nothing, except what came to him through the regular channel, that is to say, officially. The Jews answered in a surly tone, suspecting, perhaps, a snare, without, at the same time, being able to foresee its nature. Pilate had already taken his resolution. "He would send the accused to Herod; he would have the visionary king judged by the make-believe King. He, the all-powerful Procurator, would defer a case of such importance to the illusory authority of the Jewish Prince, would captivate the good graces (one knew not what might happen) of the seeming monarch. In place of his jealousy, he would excite his good-will; and while he was conferring an honor upon him, he would at the same time leave him the entire responsibility, — a masterly combination! A smile passed over Pilate's lips. It was a dangerous moment, but his diplomacy had saved him." [3]

Besides, the Roman Law authorized such a proceed-

[1] LUKE xxiii. 5.

[2] Id. xxiii. 6. "But Pilate hearing Galilee, asked if the man were of Galilee."

[3] MME. DE GASPARIN, *Jésus*, p. 314.

ing. The criminal could always be sent from the Tribunal of the country in which the offence was committed to the Tribunal of his native land, or of wherever his abode[1] might be; and certain circumstances rendered such dismissal obligatory. Everything, therefore, concurred to extricate the Procurator from the embarrassment in which he was placed by the persistence of the Sanhedrim. He profited by these favorable circumstances, without giving them time to recognize and to object that the Tetrarch had no authority outside his own territory.[2] In a few words, he ordered them to go to Herod,[3] who happened at that moment to be in Jerusalem for the Passover. Immediately a company of legionaries opened a passage through the crowd, surrounding the Accused in order to protect Him from violence, and to deliver Him with due formality into the hands of the royal officials.

Pilate, for an instant, followed the cortège with his eyes as it descended towards Acra. A sigh of relief escaped him when he saw it disappear at the turning of the declivity. His conscience reproached him, perhaps, with not having thoroughly insured the safety of the Prisoner by placing Him under the safeguard of the Roman laws; but, after all, he had not shed innocent blood, and he could trust to the acknowledged cleverness of the Tetrarch to extricate himself from this scrape. Besides, the matter did not necessarily come within his province. Why should he meddle with it, at the risk of provoking a rebellion for

[1] From the *Forum delicti commissi* to the *forum originis aut domicilii*. It is still practised in modern law. GROTIUS, PAULY, *Real Encyclopædie*, see *Forum*.

[2] W. GOES, *Pilatus Judex*, p. 47.

[3] LUKE xxiii. 7. "And when he understood that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem in those days."

which he would incur Cæsar's displeasure? Reasoning thus, he re-entered the palace, now restored to quietude; but still he could not succeed in banishing a vague sense of uneasiness, such as is experienced at the approach of some misfortune. The sky was becoming overcast, and an attentive listener might hear the thunder rumbling in the distance.

CHAPTER III

JESUS BEFORE HEROD

"But Pilate hearing Galilee, asked if the man were of Galilee? And when he understood . . . he sent him away to Herod. . . . And Herod with his army set him at naught and mocked him, putting on him a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day." — LUKE xxiii. 6–12.

THE Prince to whom Pilate sent Our Divine Lord as to His rightful judge was the fifth son of Herod the Great, by his fourth wife,[1] Malthakeh, who was a Samaritan. He was thus older than Archelaus, to whom his father seemed to prefer him until the latter days of his life, when suddenly changing his mind, he sent him away and received the younger brother into favor.

He passed through the bloody dissensions which disturbed the court without compromising himself, thanks to his natural prudence, and still more to the long sojourn he had made at Rome under the tutelage of a delegate of Augustus who, Josephus does not hesitate to tell us, was a friend to Herod.[2] Cæsar liked to keep, as hostages, the sons of these

[1] There still exists a bronze medal of Herod the Tetrarch, mentioned by the Abbé Barthélemy (*Mémoires de l'Académie*, xxvi. p. 537), and described in the *Recueil des Médailles* (vol. *Rois*). On the front there is a palm-tree, with the inscription in Greek, Herod, First Tetrarch, ΗΡΩΔΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΧΟΥ; on the back a crown of laurels encircling the word ΤΙΒΕΡΙΑΣ, Tiberias. The same *Recueil* mentions another medal of the same prince from which certain savants assert that Our Lord was born in the fourth year of the modern era.

[2] JOSEPH., *Antiq.*, XVII. i. 3.

Oriental Kings, whose fidelity seemed questionable, even when it was rewarded with the most signal favors.

On his return to Palestine, Herod Antipas married the daughter of Aretas IV., the King of Arabia Petrea, after peace had been concluded between Herod and that Prince, on the advice of Augustus himself.

There was nothing in this marriage to please the superfine Prince who had come from the Gardens of Sallust to the rugged hills of Palestine, and his discontent was aggravated by the fact that he had no children to assure the success of the political combinations to which this marriage was owing.

However, he was obliged to dissemble his feelings, and at first the Princess, who had been neglected in the harem of Macherontius, had not too much cause of complaint against the husband to whom her father had given her.

It was not long before Herod the Great consummated the wickedness of a life filled with atrocities by a still more revolting crime: the assassination of his eldest son, Antipater, who only preceded him to the tomb by five days. This catastrophe ruined the fortunes of Antipas, who was, possibly, guilty of having sympathized with the victim, if not of connivance with him. The will which made him heir to the throne was set aside in favor of Archelaus, whilst he was given Galilee as his appanage, a poor compensation with which he did not at first seem satisfied.

Scarcely was his father laid in the tomb than he repaired to Rome for the purpose of defending his claims against Archelaus who himself set out for the Eternal City some days before his rival. The cause which was referred to Cæsar became complicated by the protests of the Jewish nobility who wished to be directly dependent on the Empire, so as to free them-

selves from the yoke of the Idumeans.[1] The decision of Augustus satisfied no one. Archelaus was confirmed in the possession of Jerusalem and Judea, but with the title of Ethnarch only. Antipas remained Tetrarch of Galilee and the Jews had to resign themselves to the dominion of the sons of Herod.

The Prince's return to his dominions was saddened by the death of his mother and the incessant hostilities already waged against him by the King of Arabia, in revenge for the desertion of his daughter. Antipas, in fact, had very soon shaken off the influence which his Aunt Salome exercised over him, only, however, to succumb to that of his niece, Herodias, the daughter of Philip, who was also a son of Herod the Great. This young woman, the evil genius of her race, united in herself the charms of her grandmother, the first Mariamne, and the wickedness of her grandfather. She was the worthy sister of Agrippa I. She it was who really educated that Berenice and that Drusilla[2] whose wantonness is recorded in history.

She was married to her uncle, a son of the second Mariamne, Herod's third wife. Unambitious, a lover of peace, perfectly satisfied to live in retirement, this Prince was little likely to please a wife whose whole thoughts were centred in power and magnificence. The disgust with which Philip inspired her, drove her to her brother-in-law, an intriguer whose passion for

[1] St. Luke xix. 12–28, seems to allude to this adventure of Archelaus, particularly in the 14th verse. "But his citizens hated him; and they sent an embassage after him, saying: We will not have this man to reign over us." See Trench, *Notes on the Parables*, 514. Fillion on Saint Luke.

[2] Berenice, the daughter of Agrippa I., is mentioned in the Acts Apostles xxv. 13; and in Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, II. xxvi. 1. She scandalized the people by her equivocal behavior, as did her sister Drusilla, who was married to the Procurator, Felix (Acts Apostles xxiv. 24). Juvenal, *Sat.*, vi. 156–158.

her she divined beneath the veil of his cautious words and acts. The connection became so intimate as to cause scandal and provoke general murmuring. But Herodias was not a woman to bow her head before this hostility. Quite the contrary. A longing to brave the general animadversion seized her, and, quitting Philip, she hastened to her lover, taking with her Salome, her daughter by the husband whom she had abandoned.

Antipas joined her in her rebellion against the Law of Moses and against public opinion. Without even troubling to dissolve his marriage, or to procure a divorce for his accomplice, he dared to contract a union with her which he declared to be lawful. We find no mention in history of any protest on the part of the outraged husband; but it records for us, how the Arabian Princess escaped from her rival's hands, and sought refuge with her father, whose troops before long inflicted a bloody defeat on those of the Tetrarch.[1] Cæsar's intervention put an end to hostilities. Herod's misdeeds must not have seemed very serious in that Rome where, as Seneca expresses it,[2] the matrons counted their years, not by the consulates, but by the number of their divorced husbands, when they did not happen, like those of whom Juvenal[3] speaks, to have eight in the space of five years.

For many a long day, the Jewish Priesthood had lacked sufficient independence to enable it now to anathematize the crime of the two adulterers. Besides it would have given Herod very little concern. The great-grandson of a priest of Apollo, the son of a Samaritan woman, brought up in Rome, more a

[1] Joseph, *Antiq.*, XVIII. vii. 1.
[2] Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, iii. 16.
[3] Juvenal, *Sat.*, vi. 229.

Greek than a Jew, that is to say, more a Pagan than a believer, he would not be unduly concerned at the excommunications of the Sanhedrim. If he went up to Jerusalem at festival times, in order not to break the last tie which bound him to the Synagogue, he feared the mocking laughter of the Pharisees, and the shouts of the common people more than the censures of the doctors and the High Priests. More often he resided far from the Holy City and the Temple, on the borders of Lake Gennesareth, in that pagan Tiberias where true believers had always refused to settle. When not there, he sojourned for more or less prolonged periods at Sephoris, near Tabor, or at Bethabara of Perea which he had named Livias in honor of Cæsar's wife.

All these Herods were born courtiers, to say the least of them. When they ascended the throne, they could not divest themselves of the servile habits which their grandfather Antipater had contracted in the ante-chambers of the Asmoneans, and transmitted to his son, the future heir of his dispossessed benefactors.

Antipas is, perhaps, the most finished type of those Oriental princes, who, having attained to power by violence and artifice, retain it by servility, who are tyrants to their people, and servants to their masters. Like the rajahs of India, in whom are combined insolence and meanness, he was as compliant towards Rome as he was haughty at Tiberias. He had all the qualities of the upstart, pompous scornful pride, crafty cowardly prudence, insatiable and cruel sensuality, distrust of all superiority, and hatred of all virtue. He was, indeed, in the words of Our Lord, the fox[1] that destroys the vines[2] at night when he thinks he has

[1] LUKE xiii. 32. "Go, and tell that fox."
[2] CANTIC. ii. 15. "The little foxes . . . that destroy the vines."

nothing to fear; the jackal which flies at the least sound, and yet is not afraid of blood, if he can drink it without danger.[1] Add to those faults of origin, of education, and of fortune, the faults peculiar to the Jewish character, such as it had become from the decadence of faith and patriotism, and you have the portrait of one of the most hateful personalities in history. The disgust which the first Herod inspires, is somewhat lessened by the admiration felt for the grandeur of his designs and his boldness in carrying them out. Herod Agrippa, who was almost a Roman patrician, redeemed his name by the elegance of his manners, and his promptitude in serving his friends. Antipas has no redeeming quality which would entitle him to an honorable place between the two, — not even the mediocre excuse of success, for he was more often unsuccessful than otherwise, and imprudent as well. He never knew when to accept good advice, or to take a wise resolution. It would have been sheer waste of time on the part of the Sanhedrim to hurl anathemas at him.

Yet, there was some good in him, as we may perceive when John the Baptist ventured to address the remonstrance to him, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."[2] The nobility of the Precursor, his eloquence, his holiness, his influence, equally impressed him. It was in vain that Herodias urged him to violent measures. He was opposed to them, as much from his esteem for the Apostle, as from fear of a popular rising. But the weakness of his character did not allow him to resist to the end. In the month of May, of the year 31,[3] he caused John

[1] PSALM xii. 11. "They shall be delivered into the hands of the sword, they shall be the portions of foxes."

[2] MARK vi. 18.

[3] Or 27 of the common era.

the Baptist[1] to be apprehended and conveyed to Machærus beyond the Jordan, so as to be out of the reach of any attempt at rescue by the Jewish people.

There he was at first kindly treated; his disciples were allowed to communicate with him, and among those most eager to visit the illustrious prisoner, was Herod himself, who on more than one occasion showed himself amenable to the counsels of the Precursor. Unfortunately, his passions were stronger than his reason. On his birthday, excited by wine, and the wanton dancing of Salome, the daughter of Herodias, who was not ashamed to appear before her uncle's guests as a scenic dancer, he was induced to promise that he would give her whatever she should ask.

She asked the head of John the Baptist. In his drunken amazement the Tetrarch could not collect his senses, and before very long, the executioner appeared carrying on a silver dish a bleeding head which he handed to the dancer.[2]

From that day, Antipas was haunted at night by gloomy visions; if not a believer, he was at least superstitious, and the thought that the Prophet might arise from his tomb haunted him as a danger from which no power could protect him. Thus when he heard of Our Divine Lord's miracles, his first words were "John, whom I beheaded, he is risen again from the dead."[3] And immediately he laid snares for the Saviour, as if the prisons of Machærus could have held one come back from the grave.

The Divine Master smiled when He heard of these

[1] MARK vi. 20. "For Herod feared John, knowing him to be a just and holy man . . . and when he heard him, did many things, and he heard him willingly."

[2] Id. vi. 28. "And brought his head (John's) in a dish, and gave it to the damsel."

[3] Id. vi. 16.

manœuvres, and He said to the Pharisees, to whose hypocritical zeal He owed the intelligence, "Go, and tell that fox: Behold, I cast out devils, and do cures to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day I am consummated, . . . because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."[1]

The Son of David and the son of Herod had never met, and for the first time they were now about to come face to face on the threshold of the palace built by the Pontiff-kings of the Maccabees race. The King of Kings,[2] the Eternal Priest[3] was about to enter His legitimate abode as a criminal, therein to suffer the insolence of a semi-pagan, the usurper of His rights, the profaner of His worship, whose hands were red with the blood of His friends. Never did eye behold or mind conceive a more striking scene. Let us try to reproduce it with scrupulous exactitude.

A tradition of very recent date fixes — why, it is hard to tell — the Tetrarch's abode in the place where, nevertheless, it was utterly impossible for it to be situated. The site[4] pointed out was inclosed, beyond the possibility of doubt, in the enceinte of the Antonia, at least, in the opening of the fosse dug before Bezetha. The error seems to have arisen from the fact that the first Herod had used the fortress as a palace, and the ruins of the ancient columns found on the spot indicated, are probably a remnant of the northern portico of the atrium or of the prætorium.

The real residence of Antipas was the palace built by John Hircanus at the northeast extremity of

[1] Luke xiii. 32–33.

[2] Apoc. xix. 16. "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

[3] Psalm cix. 4. "A priest for ever." Heb. vi. 20.

[4] To the north of the Arch of the Ecce Homo, somewhat behind the convent of the Dames de Sion, quite close to the Chapel of the Flagellation.

Sion, above the ravine which separated the City of David from Mount Moriah. It was a vast edifice, built in the Greek style, with a great square before it, surrounded by porticos for the assemblies of the people, the Xystus spoken of by Josephus.[1] A bridge united the palace with the southeast angle of the Temple above the valley of the Tyropœon, so as to enable the Pontiff-kings to enter the Porch of the Gentiles by the southern portico, also called the Royal Portico. The sumptuousness of this abode could not, it is true, compare with that displayed by Herod the Great in the restoration of the Antonia, and especially in the arrangement of the buildings erected in the shelter of the Phasælus tower. But it was none the less a very pleasant residence wherein the very refinement of Asiatic luxury was to be found, — a retreat suited to a lover of a luxurious tranquil life, as it was understood by Antipas, and such as he led whilst waiting for higher fortune.

Herodias, as we have said, was of the Asmonean race, being the granddaughter of Mariamne; through her father, Aristobulus, she shared their inheritance. From the time that Judea was reduced to a Roman province, the Procurators had taken possession of the Antonia and the palace of the Upper City which belonged to the Ethnarch, Archelaus. But the palace of the Asmoneans remained in the hands of its rightful possessors and had probably formed part of the dowry of Herodias which gave her the right to open it later to the Samaritan's son after her union with him.[2]

[1] Joseph., *Bell. Jud.*, II. xxviii. 3.

[2] This is not a mere supposition. A careful perusal of contemporary documents leads to this conclusion that Herodias was the *sole heiress* of the Asmoneans. The palace of the Xystus reverted to her brother, Agrippa, after the disgrace of Antipas, in which she was involved. See Joseph., *Antiq.*, XVIII. vii. 2.

At the particular moment of which we are writing, he had been residing there for some days previously, on account of the Pasch. According to his custom, he was accompanied by his guard, a body of troops sufficiently large to be considered an army,[1] and composed of Thracian, German, and Gallic mercenaries.[2] He had received them ready formed from his father who, himself, had acquired the liking for them from his friend, Cleopatra, who was usually guarded by barbarians from the banks of the Rhine or the Danube.[3]

What a mysterious dispensation of Providence, which brought to the foot of Calvary where the Redeemer was about to die, the representatives of all the races destined one day to receive His Baptism and to serve His Church. But before their subjection to the yoke of Christ, they were, meanwhile, the most scornful and the most hated of the Gentiles. Herod might well entrust them with the duty of keeping at a distance from him those Jews whose hatred he at once braved and feared. In the minds of the discontented, the barbarian's javelin was as good as the legionary's lance. Even the fanatics contented themselves with casting from a distance furious glances at these fair-haired giants whose thoughtful eyes seemed to disdain to perceive them.

The Procurators were not in the least surprised at this display of military force which was justified by the state of Galilee, and of which they would be the first to avail themselves in the event of a riot in Jerusalem, for the royal troops lent aid to the Roman

[1] LUKE xxiii. 11. The Greek word is "*armies*."

[2] JOSEPH., *Antiq.*, XVII. x. 3.

[3] JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.*, I. xv. 4. One of the last Asmoneans, Alexander Jannæus, also had a foreign guard.

cohorts, and even took their place when necessary. Pilate and Antipas, it is true, had been at variance ever since some disputes on the point of jurisdiction, about which we are not very clear;[1] but their mutual interests demanded united action in the event of revolt. Moreover, the encampments were sufficiently far apart to prevent unpleasantness, which the most severe discipline on both sides also rendered still less frequent. The barbarians and the Romans kept watch over the Temple; the former on the north, the latter on the south, but without entering it, even when the Procurator or the King appeared in the Porch to offer victims which either their own personal devotion or that of Cæsar sacrificed to Jehovah.[2]

It was about eight o'clock when the Sanhedrists arrived at the Palace. The Prince, informed of the popular excitement by the very passing of the sinister cortège from the house of Caiaphas to the Council Hall, and from the Council-Chamber to the Antonia, was watching, no doubt, from the terrace which overlooked the Xystus.[3] On the approach of the priests, he ordered the gates to be opened, and hastened to meet these unaccustomed visitors. The "Fox" must have assumed a most gracious benevolent air, whilst the "vipers" softened their hissing and suppressed their venomous fangs. It was not the time for biting one another, but rather to act in concert for the work in which their malice and their cowardice

[1] It has been thought that their ill-feeling dated from the day that Pilate had ordered the massacre in the Temple of some Galilæans who had been incited, it is said, to rebellion by Barabbas. Saint Luke (xiii. 2) makes an obscure allusion to this execution. No contemporary historian mentions the incident. Josephus only tells us that the Galileans were constant rebels who were not afraid to create disturbance even in the very Temple itself (*Antiq.*, XVIII. ix. 3).

[2] For the sacrifices offered in the Temple, in Cæsar's name, see JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.*, and PHILO, *Legatio ad Caium*.

[3] See JOSEPH., *Bell. Jud.*, II. xxvii. 3.

should combine. Friendly relations were soon established, but more in appearance than in reality, such as had long existed between their adherents.[1] But fatal equivocations underlay these mutual civilities. The Prince reserved to himself the right to act according to circumstances, whilst the Sanhedrists wanted to force his hand at any cost.

Meanwhile the Divine Master had entered the palace gate and was standing before the new judge to whom Pilate had sent Him. He calmly glanced at the circle of courtiers and satellites and then bowed His Head, as if He desired to bury Himself in meditation. Certainly, remembrances must have crowded upon Him in that hour and place. The heroic Maccabees appeared before Him, quickly followed by their degenerate sons who were swept away as in a whirlwind by the breath of Roman power. Then came the Herods, destroying one another, staining the marble floors with blood and mire, — bloodthirsty vultures in the lions' den, opening the way to still greater vileness, according to the law of all downfall. Antipas was the forerunner of Agrippa; Herodias heralded Berenice; after them, John of Giscala and Simon Bar-Gioras, the incendiary and the assassin; then irreparable ruin and oblivion, deep as nothingness.[2]

Tears gathered in His Eyes and His Breast heaved with sighs. He no longer saw or heard anything: neither Herod, who was multiplying his questions, nor the Sanhedrists who were screaming their insults, nor the courtiers who were sneering, nor the soldiers who looked on with gloomy air. It would seem as if He were trying to penetrate to the depths of that

[1] MARK iii. 6–xii. 13.

[2] DANIEL ix. 26. "And the end thereof shall be waste; and after the end of the war the appointed desolation."

abyss of shame and sorrow. Oh, it was thou, His country, whom He saw writhing and sighing in the anguish of that agony!

Why wouldst thou not receive the salvation which He came to announce to thee? Now it was too late.[1]

Too late, He was repeating it to Himself, not venturing to cry aloud to that crowd, as if He feared to intensify the desolation which was about to overwhelm them.

Herod was at first astonished by this silence which he could not in the least understand. The Prophet had always had strange ways. The mysterious side of His personality and of His life was precisely what occasioned in the Tetrach such a strong desire to come into close contact with Him, and the present occasion seemed to him such a marvellous opportunity to satisfy that desire.[2]

Now that he was master of the Prophet's fate, he might be sure, if not of actual courtesy (he knew that these inspired men did not possess much), at least, of some serious words, a discussion on the alleged charges, perhaps bold reproaches which would remind him of John Baptist, with this advantage, that he need not fear the applause of the people or of the Sanhedrists.

He cleverly varied his questions,[3] the inflections of his voice expressed in turn, mercy or menace; he spoke of the past with respect, of the present with sympathy, of the future with wise reserve in which

[1] LUKE xiii. 34. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets," etc. Id. xix. 42. "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thy eyes," etc.

[2] Id. xxiii. 8. "He was desirous of a long time to see him, because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to see some sign wrought by him."

[3] Id. ibid. 9. "And he questioned him in many words."

hope and fear alternated. But in vain. The Accused maintained a silence which it was evident no power could force Him to break.[1]

There was nothing sullen or exasperating in His attitude, neither was there anything of the suppliant. His downcast head was not bowed beneath the weight of fear or sorrow, nor was it bent to avoid the gaze of those around; but merely testified the absolute indifference with which the Accused regarded the insinuations of His enemies and the diplomacy of His judge. Beyond all doubt, His thoughts were elsewhere, and Antipas vainly tried to guess their nature.

Perhaps some rapid intuition enlightened the Idumean as to the place he occupied in the Prisoner's meditations; but it did not suit him to acknowledge this. Every one around him was jesting: the frivolous who suspected nothing; and the clear-sighted who dissembled in order not to vex their master.[2]

Like every one else, he affected to laugh.[3] Was it not the only course to pursue? "It was evident that the man before him was only a poor lunatic who had fallen from too great a height not to be destroyed by his fall. The mania for greatness is liable to these vicissitudes, which impair the intellect. What was the use, therefore, of troubling himself about the charges brought against the accused by the Priests, the Scribes, and the Pharisees, all of whom were equally hateful. Should he use his power for their benefit, against this Victim so worthy of compassion?

[1] LUKE xxiii. 9. "But he answered him nothing."

[2] THEOPHILACT., *In Lucam.* "Jesus, . . . pium judicavit in talibushabere silentium: sermo enim prolatus ei cui nihil proficit, condemnationis fit causa."

[3] LUKE xxiii. 11. "And Herod with his army set him at nought, and mocked him."

"By no means. Courtesy demanded that he should send Him back to Pilate, who would officially pronounce the verdict of *non-lieu* (no cause).

"And to thoroughly prove that he considered it impossible to prosecute this poor man, he ordered him to be clothed in a white garment, an equivocal badge to which the Sanhedrists might attach any meaning they liked."[1]

"It was the white robe worn by candidates in Rome, and since he aspired, it was said, to royalty, it suited him perfectly. It was also the robe worn by Eastern kings. Why should not this King of the Jews wear it for once in his life? It was the garment worn by those whom the Tribunals declared innocent, and, truly, he might well be invested therewith.[2] The Sanhedrists would not admit this last signification. True, but let them settle that with the Procurator. As for himself, he was now quit of the affair, better pleased, perhaps, at the ill-temper of the Jews than at the contempt manifested towards the despised prophet."

When the white robe covered Our Lord's Divine Shoulders, the soldiers and courtiers greeted this display of royalty with ironical acclamations. The Jewish people, at first, were drawn into the demonstration and clapped their hands, not perceiving anything beyond, as is usual with crowds, ever the slaves of their first impulses. But the Priests and the Pharisees hastened to put a stop to this movement, so little in accordance with their designs. Was the pack of hounds about to be thrown off the scent, and must the prey escape them at the

[1] LUKE xxiii. 11. "And Herod with his army . . . putting on him a white garment and sent him back to Pilate."

[2] SAINT AMBROSE, *Sup. Lucam*, lib. x. n. 103. "Veste alba induitur . . . immaculatæ tribuens indicia passionis."

very moment in which they thought it was at their mercy.

Undoubtedly, it cost them an effort not to protest at once against Herod's decision. Their whole being revolted at the thought of the insult which, by insulting Jesus, he offered to themselves. This mockery of Jewish royalty, this degradation of a son of David, these reprisals inflicted by an upstart on a pretender, hurt them to the quick, try as they would to put it away. Herod was mocking them and revenging himself upon them, whilst pretending to join with them in mocking the unfortunate prisoner whom they had brought to him. They understood all that by the scornful smile with which he regarded them, as they defiled past, obliged to salute him and to thank him, as if he had fulfilled their dearest wishes.

But nothing could be done, except to return as quickly as possible to Pilate, and to work anew on that stupid people who had accepted the change with such ease, and who were about, perhaps, to release their captive, although they were pursuing Him with their shouts and jeers. In the twinkling of an eye, the palace of Antipas was empty.

The Tetrarch raised himself from the cushions of his divan and remained for some moments, leaning on his elbow, watching the crowd retire. He then lay back musing, uncertain what importance he should attach to that day's work. He had effected a reconciliation with Rome's representative,[1] and consequently had strengthened his credit with Caesar. But he tried in vain; he could not shake off the fear that he had failed to recognize some mysterious greatness, and brought upon his head the vengeance of the

[1] LUKE xviii. 12. "And Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day; for before they were enemies one to another."

gods. Was this man the Apollo of his grandfather, or the Jehovah of Moses and the Precursor? He knew not which, but he felt that the hand of a God was on him.[1]

[1] EZECH. iii. 22. "The hand of the Lord was upon me."

CHAPTER IV

JESUS IS BROUGHT BACK TO PILATE

"What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? they all say: Let him be crucified." — MATTHEW xxvii. 22–23.

"And Pilate again spoke to them, desiring to release Jesus. . . . I find no cause of death in him. I will chastise him, therefore, and let him go." — LUKE xxiii. 20–22.

MEANWHILE the centurion of the guard notified to the Procurator that the crowd was again moving towards the citadel, and, almost immediately, the Sanhedrists appeared, bringing back their Captive, covered with a white robe, amidst shouts for His death and appeals to Roman Justice.

Pilate shuddered. What did this unforeseen return signify? The royal messengers soon informed him. All must begin again, with less chance of success than before if he should persist in releasing the Accused. Was he as grateful to Herod as he pretended?[1]

We may well doubt it, if we think of the dilemma in which he again found himself, when he thought that he had escaped the difficulty. He must, in an undertone, have consigned the Tetrarch with his privileges and his compliments to the infernal regions. How much better it would have been for him if he had not depended upon the Galilæan's jurisdiction, but had put an end to the trial himself, by a clearly expressed acquittal.

[1] LUKE xxiii. 12.

He understood now that energy in the cause of integrity would have been better than cleverness. But it was too late. Herod had nothing more to do with the affair, the whole responsibility of which lay with him as the representative of Rome and of Cæsar. How could he get out of it without compromising his authority, henceforth in open conflict with the pretensions of the Sanhedrim? This time, was he to use force, or should he continue to try persuasion?

He slowly redescended the steps which led to the Lithostrotos, pointing out as he went, to the commandant of the Antonia, the arrangements necessitated by the circumstances. In spite of his agitation, he retained an unmoved countenance before the soldiers who were also calm, but somewhat surprised at the orders and counter-orders which they were carrying out. He passed through their ranks without saying a word, and, as he had done an hour before, stood on the threshold of the principal entrance. It seems[1] that additional precautions had been taken, on account of the increasing number of the agitators. A cordon of troops kept the crowd at a distance, and only Our Divine Lord, with an escort, was permitted to approach the atrium.

At a summons from the Procurator, the Chief Priests and magistrates, quickly followed by the people, advanced within hearing.[2] They were received with an air of grave benevolence. Pilate had had time to compose himself. The policy of conciliation seemed to him the best to adopt, and he was

[1] Saint Luke seems to point this out by the words, "Pilate, calling together the chief priests," etc. (xxiii. 13). Pilate, calling the Chief Priests, causes them to approach him; the crowds follow them on the same invitation.

[2] LUKE xxiii. 13. "And Pilate, *calling* together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people. . . ."

about to employ it, with the greater hope of success that his antagonists could the better judge of his moderation by the display of force with which they were surrounded.

"You have presented unto me this man," he said, "as one that perverteth the people; and, behold, I, having examined him before you, find no cause in this man, in those things wherein you accuse him. No, nor Herod neither. For I sent you to him, and, behold, nothing worthy of death is done to him. I will chastise him, therefore, and release him."[1]

All this was said slowly, so as to give the Sanhedrists and the people leisure to weigh well his words, — those in which he alluded to the justification of the Accused, as well as those which concerned the accusation itself. It seemed to the Procurator impossible to keep the balance more evenly. If justice required the Prisoner's discharge, condescension permitted the infliction of a punishment for the disturbance of which he was more or less culpable.

All, therefore, was for the best, and the Jews had no longer any reason for objecting to the conclusion of the debate.

The threat savored, it is true, somewhat of double dealing and might be construed, according to inclination, either as an evasion insulting to the people, or as a satisfaction — a terrible one — for the Accused. It reserved to the judge the means of graduating its effects, if we may say so, and he quite intended to regulate himself, according to circumstances, how much mercy or harshness should be employed.

The silence of the Sanhedrists should have enlightened him as to the scant favor with which his proposal was received. Evidently he had but little

[1] Luke xxiii. 14–16.

knowledge of men or crowds; but in this case his error is rather to his credit, for it arose from his faith in the humanity of men.

He, the servant of Tiberius, relied on the power of feeling and of pity, dealing as he was with a priesthood and a people whom he could not suppose devoid of heart, since they called themselves the worshippers of the True God. According to his ideas, the *Væ Victis* could not be written over the frontal of a Temple wherein men spoke continually of mercy and pardon. Perhaps too, he was ashamed of this concession to the people's clamors and to the jealousy of the Sanhedrists with regard to Our Lord. For, he was not ignorant of their wrath and their malice,[1] any more than he was of the humiliations which their pride had suffered. His intimate friends had often repeated to him the fiery speeches of the young Prophet, the snappish disputes of the Scribes, the acclamations of the crowd, and the threats of the High Priest. No doubt, he had, more than once, prognosticated the Reformer's fate with that mingled sympathy and scepticism which we discover in him.[2] Who can tell but that the idea of scourging Our Divine Saviour was suggested to him by the remembrance of the whip which Our Lord had in His Divine Hand when He drove from the Temple the traffickers whom Caiaphas patronized?

Be that as it may, another thought was intimately connected in Pilate's mind with this punishment. The crowd gathered around the gates of the Antonia could not forget the custom, already ancient, of releasing a condemned prisoner, at each return of the Passover. Amongst the Greeks, capital executions

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 18. "For he knew that for *envy*, they had delivered him."

[2] See first chapter of IV. Book.

were reserved for days of great solemnity, — and this custom seems to have passed from Ionia to Palestine, at a period, the exact date of which it is very hard to fix. The Romans followed the tradition after they had deprived the Sanhedrim of the right to inflict death; and to soften the severity of the blow, they granted the people the right of saving one of the criminals destined to execution, as if to delude them with the semblance of supreme power. There is no document to fix the date of this concession which is quite in keeping with the character of Augustus, and we might attribute it to him if we did not know with what wisdom and moderation Tiberius began his reign. More probably, it originated with the latter, just as did the increase of power granted to the Procurators in Judea. According to another opinion, this custom, which was of Jewish origin, was in remembrance of the Deliverance out of Egypt, and the Romans merely retained it when they deprived the Sanhedrim of Jerusalem of the *jus gladii*.[1] Whatever its origin, the people highly valued the privilege, and, far from disputing it, Pilate was resolved to make use of it in favor of Our Blessed Lord, — a vain effort, as he was shortly to discover.

Without appearing to be surprised at the silence maintained by the Jews, he continued, in the same calm, benevolent tone: —

"But you have a custom that I should release one unto you at the Pasch. Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus who is called

[1] LUDOLPH, *Vita Jesu Christi*, pars secunda, lxii. 2. "Ad memoriam hujus beneficii (liberationis ex Egyptiaca servitute) in hac solemnitate salvabant unum morti propinquum. . . . Et istam consuetudinem eis conservari impetraverant ab Imperatore Romano, sicut fuerat observata antequam Judæa esset Romanis subjecta." In fact, Pilate seems to suppose a national custom (JOHN xviii. 39).

Christ? Will you that I release to you the King of the Jews?"[1]

It is necessary to inform those who might be surprised at the precision with which Pilate designates Our Saviour, that both the criminal and the Innocent Victim bore the same name of Jesus, that is, if we can trust to tradition.[2]

Further, the surname of Bar-Abbas, Son of the Father, had often been claimed by Our Divine Lord Himself,[3] and the Procurator feared confusion, which might easily result from the manner in which he spoke the Syriac; for it is probable that he expressed himself in the vulgar tongue, so as to be understood at once by every one. He did not mean to afford any occasion for laughter under such circumstances, from regard for his dignity, and in the interest of his Client.

But the Jews were quite differently occupied. The linguistic talents of the Procurator were of less concern to them than his diplomacy, the secret of which they were beginning to divine, not a difficult matter, as it was not very profound.

Instead of leaving the people to choose from amongst the condemned prisoners, as was really the custom, Pilate suggested a name, the vilest and most hateful of all, with the evident intention of holding it up for general execration.

[1] JOHN xviii. 39; MATTHEW xxvii. 17; MARK xv. 9, and JOHN xviii. 39.

[2] According to the Armenian version, and some Greek manuscripts quoted by Origen, the robber was called Jesus Bar-Abbas (Ἰησοῦς Βαραββᾶς. MATTHEW xxvii. 16 and 17). Although several German savants have adopted this reading, still it is not universally accepted. As for the name Barabbas, it takes the forms of *Barabba* (son of the doctor) and of *Barabban* (son of the master). It is possible, Fillion says, that *Abba* may have been a surname, but there is nothing to prove this. Renan (*Vie de Jésus*, p. 406) prefers Jesus Bar-Rabban.

[3] MARK xiv. 36; JOHN i. 18, etc. The church has retained this appellation in the *Gloria in excelsis* and in the *Te Deum*.

By mere force of contrast, the name of Jesus would win sympathy.

Even if they paid no regard to the official declaration of His innocence, they could not compare the charges preferred against Him with the proven crimes of Barabbas.

Though Jesus might seem a dreamer, dangerous to certain people's ambition and passions, in reality, He had not, in any way, lessened their power or wealth. The lesson He had received from His downfall, ought to serve Him for life, and, in any case, would suffice for the people who would be, henceforth, detached from Him, even if He again found disciples to aid Him in preaching His doctrine.

All that was dead, quite dead, and the Procurator did not fear to flavor his question with a spice of banter at the expense of this founder of a monarchy destroyed before it began even to exist. "Will you that I release to you the King of the Jews?"

Whilst awaiting their answer, and in order to give suitable solemnity to the Prisoner's acquittal, Pilate ascended the Bema, placed in the centre of the Forum.[1]

This was one of the formalities which hedged round the decisions of the Proconsuls and Prætors,[2] and the Procurator, associated with these representatives of supreme justice, had to conform to the time-honored ceremonial. The crowd beheld him from afar, in this Tribunal, behind the great arch of the Antonia. A certain calm reigned over the square which the Priest and Scribes where crossing and recrossing, going from one group to another in their efforts to secure the success of their manœuvres.

[1] A. RICH, *Dictionary;* see *Pulpitum.* PAULY, *Encyclopædie;* see *Tribunal.* In the towns where the magistrates had a fixed residence, the tribune was of stone; in the camps, it was of wood.

[2] SUETON., *Cæsar*, xlvi.

There was nothing yet to indicate the effect of their efforts, which the Procurator watched with interest, struck particularly by the contrast between the excitement of the Sanhedrists and Our Divine Lord's resignation.

Standing at the foot of the Tribunal, in the midst of a picket of legionaries, the Galilæan seemed indifferent to all that was passing around Him, or rather absorbed in a meditation from which nothing could distract Him. Of what was He thinking? Pilate would have given a great deal to know, but he did not venture to question Him again, lest he should once more dash himself against that silence which he admired, without in the least understanding. An interior voice was telling him that the real ruler of events was not the High Priest, nor Herod, nor himself, all-powerful delegate as he was of Rome and of Cæsar. They were all obeying a higher Will, the mystery of which it seemed to him that he would pierce by penetrating into his Captive's Mind.

Whilst he was thus musing, a servant approached respectfully and handed him some tablets on which his wife had written a few words.[1]

"Have thou nothing to do with that just man," she said, "for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him."

Her intention was clear. The Procurator's wife was afraid to see her husband's name and that of the Prophet coupled in that fearful partnership which unites the executioner to his victim with a bond which is all the closer, the more innocent the blood shed. To what vision did she allude? We know not; but if we believe the Greek tradition,[2] she had

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 19.

[2] *Gospel (apocryphal) of Nicodemus*, ii. Compare NICEPHORUS, *Hist. Eccles.*, i. 30; ORIGEN, *Homil. in Matth.*, xxxv.

merited to recognize in Our Lord the Son of God and the Saviour of the World Whom she did not yet venture to acknowledge publicly.

This is not surprising. The Proselytes of the Gate, that is, the Gentiles converted to Judaism, but who were kept at a distance by the high-born Israelites, were numerous in Rome, and the wives of the nobles were particularly eager to enroll themselves amongst the new believers.

According to Josephus,[1] who is as precise on this point as Horace or Juvenal, there was a Fulvia, a proselyte, as well as Poppea, Nero's wife.

Did Claudia Procula owe her initiation to the Jews of the Trastevere,[2] or had she received it during her sojourn in Palestine? It matters little; she shared the belief of the Jews, that suffices. The preaching of John the Baptist must have caused her to reflect, and led her to desire baptism, and, still more, the speedy coming of the Messiah-Redeemer.

There is no doubt about the matter. Judging from the message which she sent to her husband, she was amongst the number of upright souls, preserved from the Pharisaical venom, desirous of the Kingdom of God, and prepared to hear the words of the Gospel. Saint John the Baptist had attracted her attention: with much greater reason must she have followed the journeyings of Our Lord through Galilee and Judea, seeking an opportunity to see and hear Him whenever He went up to the Temple for the Paschal Feasts.[3]

In her suite, at Jerusalem, there were probably

[1] *Antiq.*, XX. ii. 4; *Bell. Jud.*, VII. ix. 30. Compare for Rome, *Antiq.*, XVIII. iii. 5; HORACE, *Satir.*, I. ix.; JUVENAL, *Satir.*, vi. 543, and following; PERS., *Sat.*, v. 176.

[2] A Roman quarter frequented by the Jews, as well as the Suburra and the Porta Capena.

[3] BELLARMINE, *Annales, ad ann.* 44.

some of the noble women who waited on Our Lord, such as Susanna, and Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward.[1] The centurion of Capernaum,[2] the one in Cesarea (Cornelius, who commanded the Italic cohort),[3] and other officers who had succeeded one another in the command of the Antonia, must have spoken to her of the Prophet, and predisposed her to regard Him as the Saviour of Israel.

The day was at hand when she would follow in His footsteps with so much ardor and fidelity as to merit for herself a place amongst His elect,[4] but it had not yet come, judging at least from appearances. Probably she considered it due to her position not to profess her belief too openly, or perhaps she had not sufficient light to say with Martha, "Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world."[5]

However it may have been, she could not witness, without a feeling of sorrow, the events of which that morning was already so full, and which threatened to become still more serious for her husband. She divined the obstinacy of the Jews, and the Procurator's perplexity, even before the struggle had reached its final stage. Referring the matter to Herod, consoled her. She was overwhelmed by Our Divine Lord's return. Her resolution was quickly taken. She would interfere to strengthen Pilate's energy, by appealing at once to the conscience of the magistrate, and the affection of the husband.

By this interference, whatever may be thought of

[1] LUKE viii. 3.
[2] Id. vii. 2, and foll.
[3] ACTS APOSTLES x. 1, and foll.
[4] The Menology of the Greeks places her among the saints on the 27th October. See FRED. DE MATTHÆI, *Nov. Testam.* (note on the verse 19 of xxxii. chap. of ST. MATTHEW), quoting *Codex*, iii. fol. 147.
[5] JOHN xi. 27.

it at first sight, she acted in accordance with the views of the Emperor, and of the Senate. The *Lex Oppia*, confirmed by Augustus, did, indeed, formerly forbid magistrates sent to the provinces to take their wives, these latter only being allowed to remain with their husbands for a short time during the winter. Tiberius never concurred in this view of the matter. When Severus Cecinna sought to revive this law, which had become somewhat obsolete, his proposal was rejected, and a degree of the Senate simply ordered that the magistrates should be responsible for their wives' actions.[1] These latter were known to be intriguing, and disposed to use their power in favor of those who would offer for it due reward. But the Senate, at the same time, believed in the wife's salutary influence in cases where moderation and clemency need an advocate, with a magistrate easily led to be arbitrary and violent. Happy results followed such interference, and Tiberius was too wise not to give them an opportunity of effecting these good results. Claudia, therefore, did nothing which could displease Pilate, quite the contrary, and her tablets must have been very welcome.

Meanwhile, the Chief Priests and the Ancients continued to excite the people, and ended by persuading them to demand the release of Barabbas, and the death of Jesus.[2] The Procurator, engaged in reading, forgot them for a moment. When he raised his head, he perceived that they were at the threshold of the the Prætorium. He judged the moment had come to question the multitude with such cleverness as would insure the success of his plans.[3] The shouts

[1] TACITUS, *Annales*, iii. 33–34.

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 20. "But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people, that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away."

[3] LUKE xxiii. 20. "Desiring to release Jesus."

began again, showing their impatience for a prompt conclusion. Pilate hastened to reply to them.

"Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas or Jesus?"

This was an unexpected turn. Ferocious yells arose. All cried out, —

"Barabbas!"[1]

Pilate could not believe his ears; evidently the people had misunderstood him. He again pronounced the name of Jesus.

"Not this man," cried the crowd, "but Barabbas!"[2]

This time he could not be mistaken. The robber was clearly designated. Ironical words rose to Pilate's lips.

"What will you then that I do to the king of the Jews?"[3]

"Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas!"[4]

Pilate persisted. He was becoming spiteful.

"What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

"Let Him be crucified!"[5]

It was really too much. All that there was of conscience and honor in the Roman revolted with redoubled contempt for this mob and its leaders.

"Why, what evil has this Man done? I find no cause of death in Him. I will chastise Him, therefore, and let Him go."[6]

What mattered to them now the expedient pro-

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 21. "Whether will you have of the two to be released unto you? But they said, Barabbas."

[2] JOHN xviii. 40. "Not this man, but Barabbas."

[3] MARK xv. 12.

[4] LUKE xxiii. 18.

[5] MATTHEW xxvii. 22–23. "What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? they all say: Let him be crucified."

[6] LUKE xxiii. 22.

posed by this strange judge to whom the innocence of the Accused was so evident, and yet who spoke of chastisement? They felt themselves masters of the situation; with a little tenacity they would completely overcome his resistance. To his indignation they opposed laughter; they answered his questions with loud outcries;[1] always the same, "Let him be crucified."[2]

The tumult became terrible.[3] The soldiers standing beside their tribunes looked on with uneasiness and anger, astonished at the Procurator's behavior. The latter had just called an officer, and spoken to him in an undertone. Was it, at last, the order to charge this mob, and to arrest the Sanhedrists?

The officer disappeared within the palace. Silence again spread over the crowd and the garrison of the Antonia, whilst they waited for what was to happen.

[1] LUKE xxiii. 23. "But they were instant with loud voices."

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 23. "But they cried out the more, saying: Let him be crucified." MARK xv. 14. "But they cried out the more: Crucify him."

[3] LUKE xxiii. 23. "But they were instant with loud voices."

CHAPTER V

BARABBAS AND THE CROWD

"Whether will you have of the two to be released unto you? But they said: Barabbas."—MATTHEW xxvii. 21.

"What will you then that I do to the King of the Jews?"—MARK xv. 12.

"Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas."—LUKE xxiii. 18.

THEY had not long to wait. A servant soon appeared, carrying a basin. The lookers-on shuddered, as at the approach of one of those events which can never be recalled, and which involve the future irremediably.

The Mosaic Law ordained that the Elders of a city within whose confines a murder had been committed, should wash their hands in public and in presence of the corpse to protest against all participation in the crime.[1] This rite was not observed amongst the Jews only, judging from certain *lustrations* in use amongst the Greeks and Romans,[2] but it is probable that the Procurator had the Jewish custom specially in view when he ordered water to be brought to him. In any case, his intention was clear.

In presence of this Victim Whose death was demanded of him, he would wash his hands before the people, thus giving direct evidence of his refusal to accept the responsibility of the crime.

[1] DEUTER. xxi. 1–9. Treatise, *Sota*, viii. 6.

[2] Ovid (*Fast.* ii 45) makes allusion to it in these verses,

"Ah, nimium facile tristia crimina cædis
Fluminea tolli posse putatis aqua!"

The servant ascended the steps of the Tribunal, and slowly poured the contents of the ewer over Pilate's hands, who cried aloud to the crowd, —

" I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it." [1]

His hands were washed, as Saint Augustine says, but his soul remained soiled; and for eighteen centuries, Christians have reproached Pilate with the Blood which he allowed to be shed.

" He, indeed, it is who has put Christ to death, for he delivered Him into His murderers' hands." [2]

" Herod, Caiaphas, Judas, and the others had each their share in the crime, but, in the end, nothing could have been done without Pilate. Pilate could have saved Christ, and without Pilate, Christ could not have been put to death. Wash your hands! . . . Declare that you are innocent! Our answer is to repeat every day: I believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of His Father, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate," [3] and this shall be repeated to all time.

Claudia Procula must have uttered a cry of horror, but it was drowned in the dreadful clamor which rose to the Tribunal where Pilate stood, overwhelmed, with heaving chest and livid countenance. The responsibility which he rejected, all the people [4] claimed for themselves.

" His blood be upon us, and on our children." [5]

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 24.

[2] SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Sermo CXVIII, de tempore*, " Ipse enim occidit Christum qui eum tradidit occidendum."

[3] Card. PIE. Order of 22 February, 1861. DUPIN, *Jésus devant Caïphe et Pilate*, p. 97.

[4] MATTHEW xxvii. 23 and 25. " They *all* say, . . . *the whole* people answering."

[5] MATTHEW xxvii. 25.

It was not enough that their own generation should bear the burden of the murder, they associated with it the generation to come, and through it, according to the usual meaning of their words, those which were to follow in future ages.[1] It was not the crime of a few, but of an entire people, to their very last descendants, which they cast into the balance wherein was weighed their destiny.[2] Never was such madness recorded in history — fortunately for the honor of humanity. August victims have ascended the steps of the scaffold, but the nation which witnessed these crimes could not be confounded with the villains and madmen who were shedding innocent blood. A party is not a people; its existence is as short as its action is restrained, and it cannot involve any one's responsibility outside its own limits, whatever pretensions it may have. Even in the very hour of power, it is disowned and condemned by many, — if not by the greater number; for history usually shows us the ruling power in the hands of the minority, in times of revolutionary frenzy.

The Jewish people had nothing in common with a party, when they cried out, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children." Quite the contrary! They had blotted out every party division, that all might unite in one unanimous consent to the Deicide. Pharisees and Sadducees, Zealots and Herodians, Israelites of the Holy Land and those of the Dispersion, invoked upon their heads and upon those of their descendants the responsibility which, after eighteen centuries, crushes them still.

It is indeed an entire people, to use those famous words, "appointing a rendezvous for extermination,"

[1] EXOD. xx. 5. "Unto the third and fourth generation."

[2] RENAN, *Vie de Jésus*, 411. "If ever a crime were a nation's crime, it was the death of Jesus."

by placing beyond the pale of the law the noblest and most innocent of their sons.

Have they any excuse, or can this madness be explained? It would be such a good thing to even slightly lessen the horror of it, by finding at least some pretext.

The pretext — if we are to believe the Jewish writers,[1] and their rationalist friends,[2] or, to use their own words, the reason — was zeal for the Law of Moses which the Sanhedrists and the people were defending against Our Lord's attacks.

"According to the Mosaic Law," writes one of these, "in its modern form, it is true, but still accepted, death was the punishment for every attempt to change the established worship. Now, most undoubtedly, Jesus attacked this worship, and aimed at its destruction. The Jews told Pilate this, with simple and true frankness, "We have a law, and according to the Law, he must die because he made himself the Son of God." It was a hateful law, but it was the law which emanated from the ferocity of the ancients, and the hero who proposed to abrogate it, must himself submit to it, first of all."[3] It would be difficult to accumulate more absurdities in fewer words. In the first place what is meant by this Modern Mosaic Law, unless it is intended to designate the fantastic things substituted by the Scribes for the real Mosaic Law; and in that case, of what value is it in itself? What force would it acquire by being accepted, not only with regard to conscience, but also with regard to legality, even if it were true that it was

[1] From the Talmudists to Salvador and Weill.

[2] Christians of every denomination, by virtue of their baptism, but quite as much Jews as the former, unless they are posing as atheists. The names are numerous, and it is useless to make a selection.

[3] RENAN, *Vie de Jésus*, pp. 411-412.

accepted? If the Law seems hateful in these days, was there no one at that time amongst the Sanhedrists and Scribes to find this out, and proclaim the fact? The Gospel answers positively in the affirmative, by recording the protests of Joseph, of Nicodemus, and of Gamaliel.[1]

Therefore, its acceptation was not complete, and did not impart the requisite force to this hateful Law, even in the very midst of the Great Council. Besides, how would ancient barbarity explain the conduct of the Chief Priests, of the Scribes, and of the Ancients.

Admitting that the populace might be excused on account of a certain coarseness of manner, of religious and patriotic prejudices, of excitement, and the blind impulse of the masses, how would the guilt of the leaders be lessened? These men, learned by profession, hyper-refined by nature, pacific by reason of their ministry, what had they to do with ancient ferocity unless, indeed, to muzzle it, or at least to render it odious?

They not only did not try to oppose it, but, still less, did they condemn it; and it is to them and their adherents alone that Saint John attributes the atrocious exclamation, "Crucify Him; crucify Him!"[2]

They are therefore responsible, in their own name, for the application of a law, hateful, modern, — that is to say, — framed by themselves; accepted by fanatics whom they had formed and trained into crime with themselves.

But, finally, could not this modern and hateful interpretation of the Law shelter itself behind some affinity to the Law itself? In no way whatever. In

[1] LUKE xxiii. 51; JOHN vii. 50, and foll.; ACTS APOSTLES vi. 34, and foll.

[2] JOHN xix. 6. "When the chief priests, therefore, and the servants had seen him, they cried out, saying: Crucify him; crucify him." Compare MATTHEW xxvii. 20; MARK xv. 11, etc.

reality, where do we find that the Law condemned anything but the preaching of the plurality of gods,[1] blaspheming Jehovah,[2] insulting His Temple,[3] or violation of the Sabbath?[4] Now, who can accuse Our Divine Saviour of having shaken belief in the Divine Unity, of having profaned His Father's Name, of having disregarded the Sanctity of the Temple or broken the Sabbath rest?

He constantly proclaims the Unity of God, and particularly when He says that His Father and He are One, or when He speaks of His Spirit, Which proceeds equally from the Father. The idea of the Divine Word, familiar to the Greeks from the time of Plato (not to go further back), could not be new to the Doctors of Israel, as is proved by their embarrassment at Our Divine Lord's question relative to Christ the Son of David, and called Lord by that Prophet himself.[5] Therefore there was nothing which could justify the Sanhedrists in reproaching Him with His name, the Son of God, which He had justified in their presence,[6] without their being able to answer Him.

Moreover, they had sufficiently proved His right, and even His obligation to assume it, if He were the Messiah, by repeatedly saying to Him, even to weariness, "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."[7]

For it is important to remark that if the multitude had not a sufficiently exalted idea of the Christ to see in Him, a God, the Son of God made Man, these Doctors at least knew enough to interpret the prophecies rightly.

[1] LEVIT. xx. 2; DEUTER. v. 7, xiii. 1–18, xviii. 1–5.
[2] Id. xxiv. 16.
[3] DEUTER. xii. 14; JEREM. xxvi. 6–19, vi. 13–14.
[4] NUM. xv. 35; DEUTER. v. 12.
[5] MARK xii. 35–37; LUKE xx. 41–44.
[6] JOHN x. 33–36.
[7] LUKE xii. 66; JOHN x. 24.

They were right, therefore, in asking Our Divine Lord if He were the Son of God; but they were wrong in not weighing His answer by His works,[1] as He wished, and in not accepting the conclusion which was evident. They knew from the Prophets [2] that the Messiah was one day to change their worship, by transforming it so as to adapt it to the wants of all mankind. Consequently, their first duty was to verify Our Divine Lord's title to the name and the rôle of the Messiah, and the second, to bow before His teaching, instead of using it as a weapon against Him, in the name of a worship destined to come to an end.

To pretend that He had blasphemed God, as Caiaphas suggested to them, had never been possible during His life; to bring such a charge at the moment when He appeared before the Sanhedrim, was but a farce of which the actors should have been ashamed. The same applies to the blasphemy against the Temple, which they said was contained in words the meaning of which they took good care not to state precisely; besides, they did not retain it amongst the chief charges. Strange thing! these same people, formerly so zealous in reproaching Him with imaginary violations of the Sabbath [3] did not breathe a word about them before the Great Council.

What remains then of the violated Law? Their personal interests compromised, nothing more, Priests and magistrates, they must alike have been greatly tempted to appeal to the sentence of Deuteronomy,

[1] JOHN x. 38. "Though you will not believe me, believe the works."

[2] Daniel, Hosea, Joel, and Malachi had foretold the abolishment of the ancient sacrifices, and the institution of a new sacrifice which should be offered for all mankind. The Samaritan woman knew that the Messiah would effect this change (JOHN iv. 21–26).

[3] MATTHEW xii. 2; MARK ii. 24, and foll.; LUKE vi. 2, xiii. 14; JOHN v. 10, etc.

which condemns to death the proud who refuse to obey the lawful authorities.[1] But they could be reminded how careful He was to recommend obedience to the Scribes who sat on the chair of Moses, even when He counselled avoidance of their works.[2] Pilate might have remembered this, and cast it in their face. They preferred, because they felt sure of placing the Procurator in a predicament, to accuse their adversary of pretending to the Kingdom of Israel, and it was under cloak of this charge that they insinuated that of impiety, because they knew, as we have said, how close was the connection between the Mission of the Messiah and universal sovereignty. They would have none of this King, at any price; for His coming was their ruin. The crowd would mistake the point; the Procurator would only partially understand the truth; what would remain evident was the menace to Cæsar, and consequently the necessity of using harsh measures against the author of the attempt.

It was vile and hateful; but it was clever and profitable. Behold what remains of the Modern Mosaic Law, so happily appealed to by the French writer to whom we are indebted in the *Vie de Jésus* for the apology for Judas.[3] He adds that this Law was accepted. We have shown that it was disputed in the Great Council. But what did the multitude think of the matter?

In the first place, we must positively assert that

[1] DEUTER. xvii. 12. "But he that will be proud, and refuse to obey the commandment of the priest who ministereth at that time to the Lord thy God, and the decree of the judge, that man shall die, and thou shalt take away the evil from Israel."

[2] MATTHEW xxiii. 2–3. "The Scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All, things therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you observe and do; but, according to their works, do ye not."

[3] RENAN, *Vie de Jésus*, pp. 381–382, and pp. 431–438.

the crowd never properly reflect on anything at the right time. At certain moments, they appear to obey convictions, whilst the observer sees that in reality they are carried away by impulses springing from motives often illogical and which cannot be admitted. As herds, driven wild by panic, rush to the abyss, crushing all in their way, so the multitude, when excited, rush headlong into crime with their eyes shut, and then afterwards groan over the ruin and the dead.[1] This is what makes the conduct of the leaders whom they follow in their credulity so particularly villainous; though it usually happens that their dupes turn on them and crush them.

The yelling rabble of Gabbatha had no existence the previous evening. This can be easily proved by observing the elements of which it was composed.

The Jews of the Dispersion, barely arrived from the four quarters of the world, had not had time to join and act in concert with those of Judea. It was the same with the Galilæans, the Hellenists of Syria and of Egypt, the proselytes of every nationality. They had enough to do to provide themselves with food and lodging, to procure the Paschal Lamb, and to purify themselves in the Porches in order to celebrate the Feast worthily. Nowhere, during the preceding eight days, do we find them gathered together in a crowd; besides, the Roman authorities would, no doubt, be quite opposed to such a proceeding.

The bazaars, the Synagogues, the Courts of the Temple, were crowded; but men went and came, occupied with their own personal cares, which were of a nature little calculated to bring them together for any united undertaking.

Even the crowd which followed Our Lord on Palm

[1] As we have seen so often in 1870–71. See MAXIME DU CAMP, *Les Convulsions de Paris*; HENRI JOLY, *La France criminelle*, etc.

Sunday bore no resemblance to the multitude collected before the Antonia. Enthusiastic Galilæans, curious strangers, and angry Jews would not amalgamate, or lend themselves to an agitation which might bring them together in one common cause. How then was this entire people[1] formed, who came to demand the death of Jesus from Pilate?

The famous Modern Mosaic Law was accepted by the majority of the Jews in Jerusalem, by those of Judea in great numbers, and by the adherents of the Scribes, scattered over Galilee, in this sense, at least, that they would not replace it by another, contrary to their prejudices and their passions. These were in permanent hostility to Our Lord. At Jerusalem, they gathered together to meet their common adversary, and worked together to create enemies for Him.

They thus formed an army for the Sanhedrists, always ready to wage war.[2] Our Saviour's triumphant entry mobilized them, so to say, and the consequence of this fresh activity was an increase of strength and daring. Recruits rallied to them, drawn by various feelings: fear, interest, fanaticism, and that respect for authority which in so many souls outlives contempt for persons and institutions.

Therefore, on the morning of the 14th Nisan, the Sanhedrists had ready at hand a considerable number of their adherents with whom they descended from Sion to cross Acra, and reascend towards the citadel, drawing after them, the curious, indifferent at first, and then carried away by the enthusiasm of

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 25. "The whole people." *Universus populus.* LUKE xxiii. 18. "The whole multitude." *Universa turba.*

[2] Saint Paul casts the principal responsibility for the Deicide upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and their leaders. "For they that inhabited Jerusalem and the rulers thereof . . . desired of Pilate that they might kill him." (ACTS APOSTLES xiii. 27–28.)

fanatics. The possibilities for crime in this first feeling of indifference are fearful to consider.

The Sanhedrists understood this well, and counted on deriving more advantage from it perhaps, than from the hatred of their trusted adherents.[1]

But the Galilæans? Those especially on whom the Divine Master had bestowed favors, or who were amongst His disciples? The answer is humiliating to mankind. Some, like the Apostles, had taken fright, and were hiding; the others had to try to obtain pardon for having acknowledged Him, and were mingled amongst the crowd, no doubt, crying out louder than any one, to divert suspicion. What did such as these care for the Law? Their great anxiety was not to be ingulfed in the shipwreck of the Nazarene; and, to save themselves, they would have torn from him the broken spars to which they saw him clinging. Is not this men's usual behavior, and why should their defection astonish us in these days of denial and apostasy?

As for the strangers and proselytes, their faith, supposing they had any, was not deeply rooted enough for them to make much resistance. We have seen Our Divine Lord's doubtful success with these accidental auditors, to whom the Parable of the Sower alludes, where it speaks of the seed fallen by the wayside and on the rock.[2] They would have no difficulty in accepting the explanations of the Jews, and in listening to the appeals of the Sanhedrists, particularly, after the great excommunication of the evening before, the paraphernalia of which had struck their imagination.

[1] To thoroughly understand the formation, the impulses, and the action of crowds, it would be well to read the three or four pages devoted to this subject by M. Henri Joly in his book, *La France criminelle*, xv. p. 406, and foll. There is nothing new, nor has anything changed under the sun.

[2] MATTHEW xiii. 4–6.

Our Divine Lord's great crime in the eyes of all these people was His non-success. How many of those who demanded His death, had applauded Him, and were ready to do so again, if, by some miraculous means, His fortunes changed! The majority, it is true, did not indulge in this hope; in their eyes it was all over with Him, and as is the instinct of the people, they thought it a good thing to trample Him under their feet, and crush Him. In these assemblages of men apparently harmless, there are always wild beasts who communicate their thirst for blood to the others. In what way? No one can tell, but the fact has happened too often to be disputed. A thousand men who collect without even knowing wherefore, separate an hour afterwards, asking themselves in horror, the cause of the murder which they have either committed or applauded. No one foresaw it; yet all consented. Each one is morally unconscious of having committed the crime which cannot be imputed to any one individual, and yet the guilt of it burdens every soul and every life. The leaders, in other words, the Sanhedrists, to return to our subject, are evidently the great criminals in this affair; but the others are not free from reproach, and the Blood of the Just is on their hands.

Meanwhile, Pilate, caught in his own trap, could no longer refuse to grant the Jews their wish. Therefore, he sent to the prisons of the Sanhedrim, where it was still customary to keep the criminals, and caused Barabbas [1] to be set at liberty.[2]

Now, Saint John says this man was a robber.[3] Hence, on that day, the idol of God's People was a

[1] It is thus that the 16th verse of chap. xxvii. of Saint Matthew is usually understood. See FOUARD, *Vie de Jésus*, ii. p. 350, note 4.

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 26. "Then he released to them Barabbas."

[3] JOHN xviii. 40. "Now Barabbas was a robber."

cut-purse, the rival of the traitor Judas who was also a thief. With what irony God was avenging Himself in advance.[1] But then, they did not understand it, and rushed with huzzas to meet the robber. Barabbas was not only a thief, he had committed murder during a riot, of which he was the instigator,[2] like those hired assassins whose exploits Josephus narrates.[3]

After having levied contributions on the highways, he had come to exercise his talents in the Holy City, either for his own benefit, or the benefit of a master, — it matters little, the individual is so wretched. An obscure soldier in the army of evil, he would have died unknown were it not for the freak which set him above the Redeemer, just as the osprey is remarked when, dazzled by the brilliancy of the morning sun, it dashes itself against the frontal of a temple.

The release of Barabbas involved Our Divine Lord's destruction. Pilate could not forget this fact. Hence, he had to resign himself to order the Scourging, the usual prelude to capital punishment, and which he hoped to make use of for a supreme effort on behalf of the condemned.

No doubt whilst giving his orders, the Procurator thought sorrowfully of the humiliation he was suffering, both as a man and a magistrate. Not only had he yielded, but he had done so against his conscience, and against the Roman Law, which formally declared, "that the voice of the people must not be heard when demanding the release

[1] LUDOLPH, *Vita Jesu Christi*, 2. pars, lxii. 4. "Latrones latronem petierunt."

[2] LUKE xxiii. 19. "Who for a certain sedition, made in the city, and for a murder, was cast into prison."

[3] *Bell. Jud.*, IV. xi. 1–13. Compare CHAMPAGNY, *Rome et la Judée*, ii. pp. 61–62.

of the guilty, or the condemnation of the innocent." [1]

He felt himself caught in a whirlwind which was rolling towards the unknown, and, like all unfortunates who are carried away by the waves, he clung obstinately to the wreck which was to complete his destruction, instead of saving him.

[1] "Voces populi non sunt audiendæ . . . quando aut noxium crimine absolvi aut innocentem condemnare desiderant." *Codex*, lib. ix. tit. 47, num. 12, *De Pœnis*. Compare EXODUS xxiii. 2.

CHAPTER VI

THE SCOURGING AND CROWNING WITH THORNS

"Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers, platting a crown of thorns, put it upon his head: and they put on him a purple garment. And they came to him, and said: Hail, king of the Jews: and they gave him blows. . . . Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment. And he (Pilate) saith to them: Behold the man." — JOHN xix. 1–5.

THE words of Pilate, "I will chastise Him," were equivalent to ordering the Victim to be scourged; and to understand thoroughly their import, we must pause to study the documents relating to this species of torture.[1]

The ancients designated by the word "flagellatio," a punishment reserved for slaves, and inflicted on them either as a special punishment, or as an aggravation of the death-penalty.[2] It was, therefore, an ignominious torture, and Pilate's intention was to satisfy the scorn and hatred of the Jews by a humiliation, the more cruel that in Our Divine Lord it would strike the lineage of David and the royalty of Israel.

But he did not rely solely on the degradation of the Victim. The scourging in itself was something so fearful that the Procurator hoped indeed to touch

[1] MARCELL., *Digest.*, XLVIII. 9, 10; JUVENAL, *Satires*, vi. 478.

[2] See LIVY, QUINTUS-CURTIUS, JOSEPHUS, PHILO, etc. Compare SAINT JEROME, *In Matth.* xxvii. 4.

the people by the sight of the sufferings of the Condemned.[1]

The ancients all agree in placing this torture above those which at first sight seem somewhat similar. Juvenal is indignant that it should be inflicted on a man, even though a slave and a criminal, and he brands with disgrace the dissolute and brutal matrons who ordered it in their houses, notwithstanding their husbands' protests.[2] In fact, there is no question here of the *bastinado*, so common in the East, even at the present time, and which the Law of Moses inflicted for certain crimes of the second order. Nor are we speaking of the flogging, *castigatio*, which the lictors inflicted on criminals with the rods of birch or hazel of which their *fasces* were composed, even though the prolonging of this punishment might cause death. Nor would the *courbache* of modern Orientals give any idea of it, painful in other respects as are the effects of the last-named. To approach somewhat to the reality, we must have recourse to the Russian *knout*, before the time of the Emperor Nicholas, or to that fearful instrument still used in England under the name of *cat-o'-nine-tails*,[3] — strange witnesses to the difficulty with which communities renounce the traditions of their original barbarism.

When we read, in Muscovite narratives, the description of the torture by the *knout*, we experience a

[1] Saint Augustine says so positively (*Tract CXVI*), "Hoc Pilatus non ob aliud fecisse credendus est nisi ut ejus injuriis Judæi satiati, sufficere sibi æstimarent et usque ad ejus mortem sævire desisterent."

[2] JUVENAL, *Satire*, vi. 479. Compare HORACE, *Satire*, ii. 114.

[3] To indicate the number of thongs. The knout had only one thong. FARRAR (*Life of Christ*, p. 430), who speaks of the knout, is careful not to mention the English lash. Modern Germany has no reason to envy England from this point of view.

feeling of pity and of horror, which is easily explained when we remember that the executioner could kill the criminal with one blow. The suffering was graduated with a skill the thought of which makes us shudder, by means of which the sufferer was brought to the gates of death by progressive stages, thus increasing the agony without lessening consciousness. The death-rattle and the last cry should attest that the unfortunate creature had retained to the end consciousness of his suffering.

However, the Russian executioner's whip had only one thong, but it twisted with such suppleness, and entwined the criminal's chest in such a painful embrace, that it represented in itself alone a whole arsenal of instruments of torture. According to the greater or lesser degree of force communicated to it by the executioner's arm, it traced on the skin a livid or bloody furrow, mangling the flesh or cutting it to the bone. The expression, "To die under the lash," might indeed cause a shudder when it was applied to the victim of Muscovite justice.[1]

But long before, the justice of the Sanhedrim found means to surpass it, on the testimony of the Rabbis themselves. The lash of their executioners was armed with four thongs which should trace thirteen furrows on the chest, and thirteen on each shoulder. Custom had thus regulated the number of blows, although the law allowed forty,[2] lest the executioner, urged by his brutality, should endanger the criminal's life. Still, it was possible, that even this restricted number might cause death, and in that case, the torturer was not responsible, unless he had considerably increased

[1] All that we have said applies to the torture of the lash as it exists in Prussia. M. Roubée's description is repeated almost word for word in M. Krohn's book: *Manuel du directeur du prison* (1889).

[2] DEUTER. XXV. 2–3. "Yet so, that they exceed not the number of forty."

the number of thongs, so natural did it seem to die under this torture.[1]

Whatever the horror which scourging, such as we have just described, may inspire, it is indeed a far different matter when there is question of the manner in which it was practised by the Romans.

Documents superabound, according to which this chastisement, as Pilate called it, was a hundred times worse than death. We have already spoken of the rods which the lictors carried, bound in bundles, and of which they made use to beat the guilty. The practice is described by Cicero[2] with indignation, justified by the picture which he sets before us. Sextius, who was scourged by order of Verres in the Forum of Lilybæum, was left for dead, and, in fact, died shortly after. His was the punishment inflicted on a freedman;[3] his chest and shoulders were torn by the rods, not by the *flagellum*. Slaves must have suffered still more; it was their sole privilege in that "belle antiquité," on whose example we are so often invited to reflect.

Horace was not afraid to apply the word "horrible"[4] to the *flagellum*, and it is not at all an exaggerated expression. None the less, was it of common occurrence in the Roman houses, where it was officially administered by the slave called *lorarius*, from the thong — *lora* — which he managed with equal skill and indifference.[5] At first sight, this lash, the name

[1] Sepp, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.* ii. 421. It is curious to compare these observations with these words, borrowed from the Prussian *Manual* mentioned above: "Where the lash is applied, the skin should burst at the fifth blow; the following blows enlarge the wound, and, at the end of the punishment, the whole back is open. Each blow should make a cut a half centimetre long."

[2] Cicero, *In Verrem*, v. 54.

[3] W. Goes, *Pilatus Judex*, p. 52, quoting *Cujas*, lib. xxviii. § 2, *De Pœnis*.

[4] Horace, *Satires*, book i., iii. 119. "Horribili flagello."

[5] Juvenal, *Satire*, vi. 480.

of which is a diminutive of *flagrum*, does not seem so terrible as similar instruments designated by other names. In reality, it is much worse, because, the diminutive only applies to the fineness of the fibres of which it was composed, and which increased the pain of the blows.

The wounds caused by it, are always expressed by words which signify the action of cutting, such as *cædere*, *secare*, *scindere*, in contradistinction to those employed for the *flagrum*, and which express the action of striking heavily or with force, as *pinsere* or *rumpere*.[1] The *flagrum*, which certain commentators consider was the instrument used by Pilate's lictors, was made of cords, armed with huckle-bones, or of chains with metal buttons at the ends.

No doubt, it was a terrible weapon in the hands of a brutal servant; but there was a vast difference in the *flagrum*, although apparently more terrible, and the *flagellum* with its smooth bare thongs. It might cause death, according to the force of the blows; but it did not necessarily cause it, so to speak; and when we see it applied to certain martyrs, it is easy to understand that the weakness of the virgins who thus owed to it their crown, was the chief cause of its deadly power.

The horror attached to the *flagellum* was, as we have said, so natural, that the fact of the victims being slaves did not prevent them being regarded with pity.[2] Women, it is true, took pleasure in ordering it; but men had still enough of heart to turn aside their heads when they did not dare to thwart the bloodthirsty caprices of their wives.

However, they reserved this remnant of humanity for domestic life. In public, it was quite another

[1] A. Rich, *Dictionary*. See *Flagellum*.
[2] Juvenal, *Satire*, vi. 479, and following.

thing, and no Roman functionary had the least scruple in ordering scourging, whenever circumstances admitted of the punishment. The Christians, placed by the justice of the Cæsars and the Proconsuls in the lowest ranks of humanity, must have had bitter experience of it; but more fortunate than the Pagans of servile condition, their patience was sustained by the remembrance of Him who had indeed willed to be clothed with the form of a slave[1] to be reputed amongst the number of the wicked,[2] and to suffer the outrage of the most cruel scourging.

The Divine Master was, therefore, led to a marble pillar, fixed in the ground, in the northeast angle of the Prætorium. A ring was fastened to the top of this pillar which, being very low,[3] obliged the victim, who was bound to it by the wrists, to bend forward so as to present his shoulders to the action of the thongs. Pilate pronounced the traditional words, "Go; lictor, bind His hands; cover His head, and strike carefully and vigorously."[4] The executioners stripped Him,[5] and threw over His Divine Face the veil intended to hide His Tears and stifle His cries. Deep silence prevailed around that fatal pillar, and all awaited, with indefinable anguish, the Procurator's signal.

According to a Roman custom, in the case of a freedman, the apparitors of the Proconsul, or of the Prætor, unbound their fasces, and, standing on each

[1] PHILIPP. ii. 7. "Taking the form of a servant."

[2] ISAI. liii. 12. "He was reputed with the wicked."

[3] About one and a half feet above the square base on which it rested.

[4] The formula varied according to circumstances. "I, lictor . . . virgis cædito." See SEPP ii. 422.

[5] SAINT BRIDGET, *Lib. Revelation.*, i. c. x. 7. "Nihil omnino operimenti habebat, sed sicut natus est, sic stabat, et patiebatur erubescentiam nuditatis suæ."

side of the criminal, beat him with rods under the direction of their chief, the *proximus lictor*.[1]

Therefore, if Pilate had been entitled to be preceded by the *Fasces*, the actors in the sorrowful scene which we have to describe would have been the lictors, those Brutians,[2] perhaps, who, being public slaves, were placed by the Law at the disposal of the magistrates holding office in the Provinces. But it appears that he was not entitled to this privilege, any more than the Procurators mentioned in history;[3] although the name of "lictor" is given in the *Acts* to the servants of the magistrates stationed at Jerusulem.[4] The very care which the Gospel takes to ascribe to the soldiers, *milites*,[5] the Crowning of Thorns and the Crucifixion, seems to exclude the presence of any special officials in the court of Pontius Pilate.

Moreover, tradition leads us to think that Pilate, treating Our Divine Lord as a slave, adhered to the Jewish custom.

Consequently, the task must have been entrusted to one executioner only, who stood armed with a four-thonged lash, behind his Victim, on a stone step, so as to aim his blows more surely. In fact, part of the thongs reddened with the Blood of God made Man[6] still remain, and we may, with every assurance, conclude that the Roman lictors did not, in this case, fulfil their ordinary office.[7] To torture a Jewish slave was probably the business of the

[1] CICERO, *In Verrem*, v. 54.

[2] Natives of *Brutium* in Italy, a kind of Latin *Helots*.

[3] FRIEDLIEB, *Archéologie de la Passion*, p. 396.

[4] ACTS xvi. 35 and 38.

[5] MATTHEW xxv. 27; LUKE xxiii. 36; JOHN xix. 2 and 23.

[6] Preserved in the convent of Saint Benedict near Subiaco. See ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Instruments de la Passion*.

[7] GEIKIE, *Life of Christ*, ii. 548. Sepp (ii. 422) thinks the contrary, but gives no proof.

Chaouchs, viler executioners, the employment of whom the Eastern Delegates must have learnt from the Asiatic courts.

These magistrates easily assimilated themselves to the people confided to their charge, when there was no question of the Roman name or the prestige of their office. Moreover, the garrison of the Antonia was composed in great part of Syrian or Idumean recruits, to whose customs it was natural to conform on such an occasion. The Gospel, by refraining from any particular information, leaves us to understand that everything was done in the customary manner.

But the spectacle must have been none the less horrifying. At the Procurator's order, the executioner began to strike slowly, spacing the blows on the quivering flesh in such a way as to leave no part without pain. Furrows adjoined furrows before crossing one another in skilled conjuncture, shaking the whole system with a fearful shock. Soon the skin came off in bloody strips. The bones of the ribs, dug into by the sharp ends, became visible, realizing the prophetic words of the Psalmist, "The wicked have wrought upon my back;[1] they have numbered all my bones."[2] Even His Divine Face and Eyes did not escape, for it was a trick of the executioners to lash the victim's face to increase the pain of his punishment.[3]

The more delicate a man's organization, the more he is capable of suffering; and all the energy with

[1] PSALM cxxviii. 3.

[2] Id. xxi. 18. Compare EUSEBIUS, *Hist.*, xv., where he narrates the scourging of the Martyrs of Smyrna.

[3] GEIKIE, *Life of Christ*, ii. 548. Compare SAINT BRIDGET, *Lib. Revelation.*, i. x. 8. It is difficult to find a more heartrending description of the Scourging. These few lines are worth a hundred pages of Marie d'Agréda, or of Catherine Emmerich.

which he is endowed does not lessen, quite the contrary, the intensity of the pain. Now there had never been such a perfect specimen of manhood as Our Divine Lord, and this very perfection of mind and body added to each of the blows He received a force of which we can scarcely form any idea.

It would be difficult for us to tell what even an ordinary man would have endured in such circumstances; but what Our Divine Saviour must have suffered, no one can ever know, unless He Himself reveal it in the outpouring of a happy Eternity. Let us therefore give up the attempt to understand, now, this second agony, which would have been the last, if the very Will of the Divine Martyr had not decided it differently. He was to die in another hour and place. Had He not foretold that He was to be lifted up on the Cross to draw all things to Himself.[1]

However, before we proceed further, we have a lesson to receive which naturally occurs to minds intent on the Redeemer's sufferings. In the ancient Law, the penalty of the lash was inflicted for certain weaknesses of the flesh.[2] Hence, pious authors have thought that in the long course of expiation endured for us, the Scourging had for its special object the expiation of sins against chastity.

In reality, what is the yielding to guilty pleasures but submitting the liberty of the spirit to the servile yoke of the flesh? And what punishment was better suited to the man thus degraded, at the moment in which, represented by the Son of God, he was offering himself to Divine Justice, to discharge his debt and to solicit pardon?

[1] JOHN xii. 32. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself."

[2] LEVITIC. xiv. 20.

Meanwhile the scourging was drawing to an end.[1] The Divine Victim, mangled, gasping for breath, sank on the ground which was red with blood. The apparitors unbound His sacred Hands, raised Him up, and put on His garments, whilst waiting for further orders.

But it appears that Pilate did not assist at the execution of the sentence, which was superintended by the centurion of the guard. The Gospel narrative does not, indeed, suppose the Procurator's presence, nor even of any superior officer who might be responsible for the excesses which followed. The unfortunate representative of Rome lost his head when he found himself in such a position. He went from the Sanhedrists to his own counsellors; he wanted to control events, and yet he let them take their course, trying whether when the deeds were done they would not afford him some means of avoiding an energetic but dangerous decision.[2]

The soldiers could not divine his hesitation, and for them, Our Divine Lord scourged, was a man condemned to the punishment of slaves, the cross, of which they had heard the Jews demanding the erection. Logic led them to conclude that the Procurator, by the disgrace of such punishment, wanted to crush the criminal's pretensions to the throne of Israel.

He had dreamed of mounting higher, and he had been obliged to descend lower. Therefore, they, the

[1] There have been long dissertations on the number of strokes received by Our Divine Lord. Most of those who found their statements in the *Révélations*, speak of five thousand and more. It seems to us useless to dispute these assertions, or those which outdo them, such as we read in Catherine Emmerich (c. xxii.) The annotator of Saint Bridget, Gonzalvo Durant, merely thinks that the number of blows exceeded forty, but makes no attempt to fix an exact number. Saint Bridget herself does not name any number.

[2] Saint Augustine, *Tractatus CXVI, in Joannem.*

avengers of the Sovereign-People, had only to follow the road marked out, by emphasizing their dislike to all pretenders to royalty. An inspiration came to them, which they did not delay in carrying into effect. They would make, after their own fashion, a King of the Jews. Dragging Our Divine Lord after them, they went back to the centre of the Prætorium, whither they summoned all their comrades quartered in the Antonia,[1] that is to say, about five hundred men: foot-soldiers, sutlers, and servants of various grades. Whilst waiting for the number to be complete, they took their Victim into the guard-house, stripped Him, and then threw over His sacred Shoulders a purple *chlamys*,[2] so as to simulate the mantle worn by kings on the day of their coronation.[3] But a crown was wanted. Cæsar wore none, disdainfully leaving to tributary princes and his allies the right to so adorn themselves.

In the East the diadem is, on the contrary, the necessary sign of supreme power; not the simple fillet of wool of the Greek heroes, but the mitre, *infula*, or the tiara, *cidaris*, — a high headdress ending in points or rays covered with plates of gold or of precious stones.[4]

It was crowned thus that the first Herod was accustomed to appear in old times, and thus that the High Priest appeared on solemn occasions,[5] and it is thus that they were going to present the new King to the acclamations of the crowd. A circlet of rushes

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 27. "Then the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band."

[2] A kind of mantle, common to the Greeks and the Romans (translator's note).

[3] MARK xv. 17. "And they clothed him with purple."

[4] A. RICH, *Dictionary* for the words *Cidaris*, *Infula*, *Mitra*, *Tiara*.

[5] EXOD. xxix. 6. "And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head." Compare Id. xxviii. 36 and 39.

taken from their horses' litter represented the diadem, properly so-called, that band of embroidered wool which encircles the brows of princes above the tiara.[1] In this pad, they then stuck branches of thorns taken from the fagots intended for the fire of their bivouac.[2] They thus formed a raised cap, whence protruded long points, recalling the rays of the Chaldean mitre.[3]

Alas, it was not only on the outside that the thorns projected. Sharp and pointed, they protruded everywhere, inside as well as outside, lacerating Our Divine Lord's Sacred Brow and Head. By a cruel irony, it was their flowering season, and some white flowers had bloomed on the stems,[4] simulating pearls, which soon mingled with the Rubies of the Precious Blood, coagulated on the prickly points. A sceptre was wanted now! A reed would be the very thing, placed in the Prisoner's Divine Hands.[5]

All was perfect. They contemplated Him for a moment with an air of satisfaction, then, opening the door against which the cohort was pressing, they pushed Him before them with shouts, and laughter, and hisses! Joyous plaudits answered them. Truly, the whole affair was well got up and deserved to be applauded! The ranks retired in mock respect, and

[1] This circlet is preserved in the Treasury of Notre Dame in Paris. See its history in ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Les Instruments de la Passion*.

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 29. "And platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head." These thorns, no doubt, belonged to the *Rhamnus spina Christi* (ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Mémoire sur les instruments de la Passion*). Compare TRISTRAM, *Natural History*, and HASSELQUIST, *Travels*, which point out the Nebek.

[3] ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *loc. cit.*; TROUILLAT, *Le Rosaire aux Saints Lieux*, p. 117.

[4] According to a tradition, which has often been justified by miracles.

[5] MATTHEW xxvii. 29. "They put . . . and a reed in his right hand."

then a circle was formed round the stump of a pillar which one of them had the happy thought to roll there,[1] a throne well-chosen for the King whose reign they were inaugurating; some of the débris remaining after a Jewish rising, like that human ruin which another rising would soon carry away.

"Sit down," and He fell on the rocking seat, which they pushed maliciously so as to cause the poor Victim to fall over; He tottered; slipped; rose with an effort on His lacerated knees and chained Hands. The fall disarranged the symmetry of His head-gear; they snatched the reed from His contracted Fingers, and struck His Divine Head with it to fasten the thorns.[2] Then they organized a march past. Slowly they passed before Him, bending their knee, and flinging at Him the traditional salutation, "*Ave, rex Juaæorum!* Hail, King of the Jews!"[3]

Every few moments, there was a halt in the procession; some one amongst them had thought of a fresh insult. He was struck on the Face, spat upon, and finally the reed was broken upon His sacred Head.[4]

Each of these interruptions caused an abrupt stoppage; several lost their equilibrium, and fell over their Victim, who was trampled underfoot, and nearly stifled in the crowd. And ever, rising above the tumult of insult and blaspheny, was heard the mocking cry, addressed as much to the Sanhedrists themselves, as to Our Divine Lord, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

[1] This pillar, called *of the Improperia*, is preserved in the Greek Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was probably taken from the ruins of the guard-house, which the Jews had sacked and burnt several times.

[2] MARK xv. 19. "And they struck his head with a reed. And they did spit on him."

[3] MATTHEW xxvii. 29. "And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews!"

[4] Id. ibid. 30. "And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head."

The entertainment was not absolutely new. It was a usual one amongst the Chaldeans, and was to be revived in other times and places. The Roman soldiers made it a practice to mock the Oriental Kings whom Cæsar allowed to ascend the throne. Those derisive adornments, — the mantle of faded purple, the crown of rushes, the reed sceptre, used to play their part in those burlesque coronations in which some poor fool acted the rôle of the derided monarch.[1] This time, Herod's soldiers had given the signal for the saturnalia, and those of Pilate would not be behindhand. The red chlamys had replaced the white garment. Herod's soldiers hailed Jesus as a candidate for the throne; the Romans proclaimed Him King. Strange thing! Earthly royalty had itself instigated His degradation so as to avoid the obligation of acknowledging Divine Royalty.

Is it not too often thus, and are not the princes of every race subject to these periodical fits of folly, in which they lose their heads, and cause their own downfall by conspiring against the Lord and against the Christ?[2] They think it wise to stir up the passions of the crowd, and they applaud rebellion against God; as if it were possible that this contempt for Divine Authority would not lead the people to shake off the yoke of all authority.

In the midst of these outrages,[3] Our Divine Lord

[1] Herod Agrippa I., created King of the Jews by Caligula, was thus publicly mocked in the Forum of Alexandria in Egypt. See PHILO, *In Flaccum*, 970.

[2] PSALM ii. 2. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together, against the Lord, and against his Christ."

[3] Renan (*Vie de Jésus*, 407) says very justly: "It is difficult to understand how Roman gravity ever indulged in such disgraceful proceedings. It is true that Pilate, as Procurator, had hardly any but auxiliary troops under him. Roman citizens, such as the legionaries were, would never have condescended to such unworthy acts."

remained silent, allowing His sacred tears to flow; the sole protest which He permitted to Himself; yet they fell in spite of Him, forced from human weakness by the excess of His sufferings. How bitter they must have been when, in prophetic vision, He saw pass before Him the long procession of those who would rebel against His Truth and His Love, hurling at Him, like Pilate's soldiers as they passed, an insult or a defiance! But had they no sweetness when He also beheld the soldiers of Constantine and of Clovis, and heard, in anticipation, their enthusiastic acclamation: "*Ave rex Judæorum!* We salute Thee, O Christ, King of the Jews!"

The entertainment had lasted long enough. Perhaps, the people would begin to murmur at this parody, in which David was jeered at in the person of the Man who called Himself his heir. It might please them to persecute the Pretender; but it did not follow that they would consent to see remembrances and hopes insulted which they cherished in the depths of their hearts. Strange race, whose mind it was impossible ever to fathom, who, of old, wearied the Procurator with resigned entreaties, who were ready to die rather than be unfaithful to their observances, and who were now taxing their ingenuity to obtain the sanction of their own downfall! What might result from the excitement of this crowd, which knew but little of what was happening in the Prætorium?

For the Scourging and the Crowning with Thorns had taken place at such a distance from the Jews who remained outside in the square which preceded the Antonia, that they had scarcely seen anything of what was taking place. The Victim whom they claimed with such loud outcries must be shown to them. All that had happened suited to a nicety the effect which Pilate had in view when he ordered the

scourging, and which the soldiers had marvellously completed by their parody of coronation.

From the top of the marble steps, he signed to the soldiers to bring Our Divine Lord to him. No doubt they thought he wanted a nearer view of this spectre of a king, and they crowded round the Prisoner, still continuing their insults and their buffoonery. But silence was sternly commanded. The Procurator advanced slowly by the platform of the gallery towards the tribune, which rose above the great entrance arch,[1] followed by our Divine Saviour, exhausted, and stumbling at every step. If He had not been supported by the guards,[1] He could never have reached the place of Pilate's projected exhibition.

Meanwhile, the crowd had seen the stir on the terrace, the soldiers taking up their places on the loggia, the Procurator himself advancing to the balustrade, and preparing to speak. By degrees quiet was restored from one end of the square to the other, in the expectation of what was about to happen, no one knowing, besides, what spectacle was prepared for them.

Pilate began to speak, "Behold, I bring Him forth to you that you may know that I find no cause in Him." And then, revealing the Victim whom he was hiding from the people, he pushed Him to the edge of the tribune, exclaiming, in a voice vibrating with compassion for Our Lord, and contempt for the Jews, "Behold the Man! *Ecce Homo!*"[2] He had counted on this unexpected appearance to appease all wrath, and to surprise them into pity. Who could resist the sudden apparition of that bleeding spectre? That

[1] P. Marie Ratisbonne thought the Ecce Homo took place in the tribune which seems to have been over the lesser arch on the left, the one covered by the altar of the Convent of Sion (*Terre Sainte*, 15 May, 1882).

[2] JOHN xix. 5.

Head surrounded with thorns, that Face furrowed by the lash and bruised with blows, those half-closed Eyes whence the tears were flowing, those pallid Lips, ready to breathe forth the last sigh, that gasping Chest, the awful wounds of which were revealed between the folds of the purple mantle, those bound Hands which held a shaking reed, — that whole accumulation of sorrow and of humiliation, at once grievous and repulsive, yet with a majesty shining over all, like a ray of sunlight on a wreck — was not this enough to impress every mind, and conquer every heart? He thought so, and the delusion must be pardoned, since it does honor to human nature, the more so as he was the only one who was thus deceived.[1] The soldiers hardly bestowed a thought upon the whole occurrence, and the crowd were about to prove their estimation thereof.

A moment of stupor followed the sudden appearance of Our Divine Lord. Was it commiseration or surprise? The masses are capable of the most varied impulses, and the Sanhedrists distrusted this emotion.

Without further delay, they raised the cry, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" in the hope of carrying the crowd with them.[2] Still the silence continued, and Pilate took advantage of it to speak again.

"Take him you and crucify him, for I find no cause in him."[3]

There was, in this reply, wrath, contempt, and above all, spite. What had it served him to treat the people with consideration? He might, perhaps, have got some satisfaction from the populace; but he had nothing to expect from these Priests, these Lawyers,

[1] Saint Augustine, *Tract. CXVI in Joannem.*

[2] John xix. 6. "When the chief priests, therefore, and the servants had seen him, they cried out, saying: Crucify him!"

[3] Id. ibid.

these Puritans. He should have known this. It would have been better to let them feel the spur. But they were masters of the crowd whom they could incite to rebellion. He wanted, at any cost, not to draw the sword until he had exhausted every method of conciliation. Cæsar did not like violent methods unless they were his own inspiration, and to take such a step, for a man unknown to him the evening before, was to incur too much risk. This Man, it is true, seemed to him to be invested with supernatural greatness; instinctively he told himself, that he had committed sacrilege in laying hands upon Him, and that Heaven itself would avenge the consummation of the crime.

What was he to do, if indeed there remained anything more to be done? At this moment the Jews, recovered from their stupor, cast at him, like a defiance, the answer which the Sanhedrists had whispered to them. "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."[1]

Ah, yes, you fools; it is because of that He must die, since man's Redemption could not be accomplished but by the death of the Son of God made Man. But they knew not what they said. Pilate was afraid.[2] A flash of lightning had illumined the darkness in which his mind was struggling. As a fiery charger stops short, trembling, sniffing the air uneasily, because he has scented the vicinity of the lion, so did the Procurator feel a shudder run through him, and his hair stood on end. He divined in the darkness the vicinity of the Godhead.

[1] JOHN xix. 7.

[2] Id. ibid. 8. "When Pilate, therefore, had heard this saying, he feared the more."

CHAPTER VII

JESUS IS CONDEMNED

"Now when Pilate . . . sat down in the judgment-seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. . . . Then, therefore, he delivered him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him forth." — JOHN xix. 13–16.

IT did not suit the Procurator to allow his agitation to be seen by the Sanhedrists and the people. Therefore he took Our Lord into the Prætorium again, to put the question to Him which was trembling on his lips.

"Whence art thou?"[1]

That is to say, "What is Thy origin?"

It was no longer a question of what He had done, but whence He came, from earth or Heaven. Was He not the son of Joseph and of Mary; or did He owe His birth to a more illustrious paternity? The poets willingly accepted those descents of the Immortals upon our earth. No doubt the traditions collected by the poets were scarcely taken seriously by the great intellects of Rome; but, after all, Cicero did not utterly reject them. Livy seemed to admit them; and Cæsar had not disdained to turn them to good account for the benefit of his race. Was it not therefore possible that a son of the gods might be there, — unknown, insulted, yet patient, but ready to avenge Himself?

Recollections crowded upon him; he remembered the cures performed in the Temple itself, almost

[1] JOHN xix. 9.

before his eyes; the raising of Lazarus, which happened a couple of paces from Jerusalem, in that village visible from the Antonia; the quite recent (for it took place the evening before) overthrow of the guards in the Garden of Gethsemani, and, more recently still, for it was but one hour ago, that declaration that He was the King of souls, and that His Kingdom was not of this world. The undisturbed majesty of His Countenance and of His tones; the calm disdain with which He met the fury of the crowd and of the Sanhedrists; the superhuman patience with which He suffered without complaint, — did not all these things denote a supernatural origin?

The Court of Augustus and of Tiberius was a learned court. Pilate, probably, was conversant with the Greek tragedians and philosophers. He was familiar with Æschylus and Plato, and the great visions in which they had seen the Just One[1] — the cherished son of a Father who was yet His enemy[2] — suffering for the redemption of men. Did these haunt his brain? Who can tell? But it is difficult to believe that the Jewish doctrines relative to the Messiah — familiar doctrines in his house — did not recur to him then, and disturb him to the very depths of his soul.

The Messiah was to be of divine origin; he had been told so, not once, but often, whether he asked from curiosity or listened to the accounts of the controversies between Our Divine Lord and His antagonists. If, therefore, he had the expected Redeemer before him, he was in the presence of a God, hidden under human form; and he must take great care what he would do and say in His regard. The better plan and the more simple was to question Him with benevolent discretion.

[1] PLATO, *Republic*, Book ii. [2] ÆSCHYLUS, *Prometheus bound.*

"Whence art Thou?"

His heart was throbbing; with dilated eyeballs and quivering lips, he awaited that answer which would settle his doubts and show him the course to pursue.

Jesus kept silence.

"Speakest thou not to me?" insisted Pilate. "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee?"[1]

A wan smile lighted up the Divine Master's Countenance; with a kind of irony, tempered with pity and mercy, He said in a low voice,—

"Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above."

Pilate was doubtful as to the meaning of these words. Did the Prisoner wish to remind him of his subordinate position, as being merely Cæsar's delegate, or was He speaking of that supreme delegation which the Almighty was making at that moment of His right over the life and death of all creatures?

Perhaps he was about to ask an explanation, when Our Lord completed His sentence. "Therefore, he that hath delivered me to thee hath the greater sin."[2]

Indeed, he that hath delivered, namely, Judas, Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, each in turn, who knew or ought to know Our Blessed Lord's Divine Mission. They had the prophecies to guide them in determining the characteristics of the Messiah; they had the miracles to attest the supernatural power of the Son of Mary; they had His Virtues to inspire them with respect, in default of submission. If they did not know, it was their own fault; if they did know, it was a still greater fault not to bow down before the Messenger of the Lord.

Meanwhile, they hated Him, deprived Him of

[1] JOHN xix. 10. [2] Id. ibid. 11.

liberty, declared Him worthy of death, and ended by delivering Him into Pilate's hands for the execution of the sentence which they had pronounced against Him.

Pilate's case was quite different. He had not been brought up in the study of the prophecies; and the cares of his office prevented him seeking their explanation, even if he could have understood anything about them. Most undoubtedly, he knew Our Lord by reputation; he was not ignorant of the title which He assumed, nor of the prevailing opinion about Him; he had often heard of the prodigies multiplied around His path. But all this reached him through the mists which distance gathers round the most luminous facts; at Cæsarea he was too far away; and his sojourn in Jerusalem was too short; everywhere he was too distracted by the excitement of his political and military life. He was guilty of not rendering justice to the Accused, but he was not guilty of hating Him, of persecuting Him, or of demanding His death. He cannot be excused; but they must be accursed.

"An extenuating circumstance may be found for the abuse of power of which Pilate is about to be guilty in the fact that he did not willingly interfere in this affair. He submitted to it, whilst the Jews alone began it, and conducted it contrary to all justice. None the less, the responsibility of it remains with him, and Jesus, with imposing authority, makes him understand this."[1]

If the crime of the Jews was more serious, it does not, thereby, lessen that of the Procurator. And what a crime! The unhappy judge's conscience revolted at the thought of such infamy. This time, the question was definitively settled. He would release

[1] Le Camus, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.* iii. p. 323.

Jesus,[1] and, without further delay, he turned to the crowd to announce his determination.[2] Yet he did not seem to acknowlege the Divinity of his Protégé any more than he seemed to believe in the existence of truth. Strange mind which recoiled from any definite conclusion, and hence he exposed himself to all kinds of contradictions and recantations, as he is about once more to do.

Behold him again in presence of the people, preparing to announce his decision. Meanwhile, the Sanhedrists had been busy. They perfectly understood the situation which was the result of the Procurator's hesitation. They felt how little importance was attached to the charge based on their Law against blasphemers and false messiahs, by a stranger who scorned their doctrinal quarrels, and who was convinced that he had outstepped the severity permitted with regard to such offences.[3] Pilate's emotion at the thought that the Prisoner might be something more than a mortal man had not escaped them. To insist might be awkward, and therefore success depended on an immediate change of tactics. Although the allusions to the tribute paid to Cæsar had failed in their desired effect, still it was safer to take advantage again of the fear, only too well-founded, with which Cæsar inspired all the officials of his government.

"Of all tyrants, it may be said that there was not one more jealous of his authority, or more pitiless, than he whose hands at that time held the reins of the Empire; Tacitus[4] and Suetonius[5] render Tiberius

[1] FOUARD, *La vie de N. S. J.-C.* ii. p. 359.

[2] JOHN xix. 12. "And from henceforth, Pilate sought to release him."

[3] Compare ACTS xxii. 29, xxv. 18–19.

[4] *Annal.*, iii. 38. "Majestatis crimen omnium accusationum complementum erat."

[5] *Vit. Tiber*, lviii. "Qui atrocissime exercebat leges majestatis."

this justice. . . . For the Emperor to learn that all at once an individual, in one of the provinces, had assumed the title of king would be certain disgrace for Pilate. And disgrace meant death."[1]

Therefore, Pilate must be left no alternative but to sacrifice Our Lord, or else to give those who were jealous of him, and who would quickly turn informers, reason to think that he tolerated His pretensions to royalty. The probability of the truth of such a charge would have nothing to do with the matter; the mere formulation of it would suffice for the dismissal and punishment of the suspected magistrate.

Others had had experience of this. Sejanus himself, for one, who, it was said,[2] was formerly Pilate's patron in those days of favor destined to end so tragically.[3] Scarcely two years had intervened between the catastrophe in which the favorite's fortunes had suffered shipwreck, and the crisis in which his tool was now struggling. The lesson must be the more impressive and the quicker in its result.

No doubt it supposed a disinheritance of the people, which he would not accept without protest, if he had leisure to reflect on it; but by hurrying the catastrophe, no one would perceive this clearly enough to measure the consequences; and besides, some means would always be found to retrieve them and to palliate them. As usual, the crowd accepted with confidence the suggestions of the leaders, and when Pilate appeared on the threshold of the Antonia, he was greeted with the cry: —

"If thou dost release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend, for whosoever maketh himself a king,

[1] Le Camus, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.* iii. p. 325.

[2] Ledrain, *Hist. d'Israël*, ii. p. 365.

[3] Dion. *Hist. rom.*, lib. lviii. c. 11; Tacitus, *Annal.*, lib. v. c. 9; Juvenal, *Sat.*, x. 61. Sejanus was put to death on the 18th October, in the year 783 of Rome, 31 A. D.

speaketh against Cæsar."[1] The Procurator staggered as if struck by a thunderbolt. For a moment he lost consciousness of his surroundings. Over the hills, on the wide sea, he saw the bloody silhouette of the tyrant then at Capri. He heard the centurion's step bringing the news of his ruin, and in his flesh he felt the point of the sword with which Cæsar struck his enemies. When he regained composure, his resolution was taken. Why should he ruin himself, without even the certainty of saving a man so little anxious to save Himself? The mystery which surrounded the Galilæan, if it did not render Him guilty, at least made Him suspected. This would be the opinion about Him in Rome, and the Senate would surely condemn the acquittal of such a prisoner, even if the equivocal clemency of Tiberius appeared not to hold Him accountable.[2] Clearly there was nothing to be done but to leave Him to His fate, since nothing henceforth could save Him.

If He possessed any supernatural virtue, let Him make use of it now. What it was said He had done under so many other circumstances, He could do again; and if Heaven abandoned Him, was it not a proof that His career was drawing to a close? What was the use of opposing Fate?

But, while trying to palliate the shame of his capitulation, Pilate was only the angrier with that cruel, senseless people who were led by hatred to renounce their nationality. He was more disgusted than astonished at that fanatical submission, that servility which had gone to such lengths as to lead them into riot.[3] He would have liked to crush them, not for the purpose of forcing his will upon them, but to

[1] JOHN xix. 12. "The Jews cried out, saying, etc. . . ."
[2] TACITUS, *Annal.*, lib. vi. c. 6 and 7.
[3] CHAMPAGNY, *Rome et la Judée*, i. pp. 159–160.

show them his contempt, and while he was yielding to their humors, he was seeking some means of humiliating and annoying them.

With a slow, halting step, he reascended his Tribunal, and ordered Our Divine Lord, Who had remained behind in the hands of the soldiers to be led forth. Then, as He stood beneath him, he showed Him to the Jews, saying in an ironical voice, —

"Behold your king!"[1]

The Sanhedrists understood Pilate's intention, and the word stung them as if they had been lashed in the face with a whip. They answered with a veritable roar,[2] —

"Away with him! away with him; crucify him."[3]

Pilate persisted, —

"Shall I crucify your king?"[4]

He took pleasure in his revenge, and prolonged it; he wanted to thoroughly degrade them so that they could never reproach him for his participation in the crime of which they were demanding the consummation.

When Pompey ordered the head of Alexander II.[5] to be struck off, and Antony did the same to Antigone,[6] the hearts of all true Israelites had felt the insults. But in those instances, it was more a matter of dealing with pretenders than with actual kings, for the crown of Juda still rested on the heads of the sons of the Maccabees, Aristobulus and Hyrcanus. Besides, the sword which struck the royal victims, did not dishonor them. Beheading was the punish-

[1] JOHN xix. 14.
[2] LE CAMUS, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.* iii. p. 327.
[3] JOHN xix. 15.
[4] Id. ibid.
[5] JOSEPH., *De Bell. Jud.*, I. vii. 1.
[6] Id. ibid. I. xiii. 75. Ledrain (*Hist. d'Israël*, ii. p. 316) makes him die on the wheel, without justifying this statement.

ment of freemen and of soldiers. Pompey or Antony would never have dreamed of putting them to the death of the cross; that is to say, of treating them as slaves, and thus striking, in their persons, the nation, conquered, but not enslaved. Pilate would attempt what the triumvirs would not have believed feasible, just to see to what lengths the Sanhedrists and the multitude would be driven by passion and madness. He would venture to associate officially the idea of Jewish royalty with the punishment reserved for the outcasts of the human race.

It was at once a cruel and a dangerous caprice, and one in which he would have hesitated to indulge, if he had been more master of himself.

However, he was gratified beyond his wishes, "Sealing their renunciation by a last act of baseness, the Chief Priests, those who represented the ancient party of independence, answered,[1] —

"We have no king but Cæsar."[2] It was finished. The people of God had ceased to exist by the very avowal of their Pontiffs. "They abolished, therefore, their old theocracy, and these proud patriots demanded to be confounded henceforth with the other races, slaves to the Roman Empire. They gave themselves to Cæsar, that they might suppress Jesus Christ. The latter would have saved them; the former in a little time, will slay them, on the very anniversary of the Pasch.

"With regard to Pilate, since the sacerdotal party have yielded to Cæsar, he hesitates no longer to sacrifice Jesus Christ. Such a solemn renunciation deserved that reward."[3]

The Gospel has been careful to mark the exact

[1] Le Camus, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.*, iii. p. 327.
[2] John xix. 15.
[3] Le Camus, iii. p. 327.

hour in which the Jewish nation ceased to exist. "It was about the sixth hour, *hora quasi sexta*," says Saint John,[1] or, according to our reckoning, about eleven o'clock in the morning.

In reality, it was not quite the sixth hour, that is to say, mid-day.

But the third hour, which began at nine o'clock, had nearly elapsed when Pilate uttered those ironical words, "Behold your king," and the priests made answer, "We have no king but Cæsar."

Was it useless trouble on the Apostle's part to preserve for us these exact particulars?

Certainly not, for nothing is to be passed over in the recollections of the Master's Passion; and we must rather regret the loss of a thousand precious details. But from another point of view, how touching is the evocation of this hour! Who is there who has not paused to gaze and muse on the hand immovably fixed by the incendiaries' work on the dial-plate of the Tuileries. On that morning of the 14 Nisan of the year 34, it was not a palace or a government, but a nation which fell; and as we listen attentively to the Gospel narrative, we still hear, after eighteen centuries, the echo of its fall into eternity.

Still the sentence which smote Our Divine Lord had not yet been pronounced in official form, "*Ibis ad crucem!* Thou shalt go to the cross." Pilate, therefore, turning to the Victim, pronounced judgment, which was followed by the equally traditional order, "*I, lictor, expedi crucem!* (Go, lictor, get ready the cross)."[2]

[1] JOHN xix. 14.

[2] Various formulas, more or less explicit, have been imagined, all equally apocryphal. See BONNETTY, *Documents historiques sur la religion des Romains*, iv. p. 969. Compare MARIE D'AGRÉDA, *Cité mystique*, ii. part, Book vi. c. xxi.; CATHERINE EMMERICH, *Douloureuse Passion*, iv. part, c. xxv.

Then he descended the steps of the Tribunal, and without casting a glance at the Chief Priests, without condescending to notice their obsequious salutations, he re-entered the palace, whilst the soldiers dragged away their Victim. It is a strange thing that the Gospel, which so carefully noted the cries of the crowd before Pilate capitulated, says nothing as to the manner in which the sentence was received. Is this to avoid an uninteresting repetition? Is it not rather that a great silence ensued, and that the Jews, frightened, if not at their crime, at least at their disgrace, for a moment felt shame and regret? There are such gleams of light even in the midst of the most profound darkness, and such reprisals of conscience,—even when the guilty are carried away by the most violent impulses. No one can behold without terror the last vestige of honor and of liberty disappear in the ruin of religion and nationality.

Pilate, his soul full of bitterness, reascended that marble staircase down which he had so lately come with such pride and calmness. One last glance at the atrium of the Antonia showed him the Divine Master in the hands of the executioners, stripped of the purple cloak, and putting on His garments with difficulty, amidst jeers and insults.[1] Two paces from Him rose the Cross, ready to be laid upon His Sacred Shoulder. Through the opening of the great Arch he saw the crowd, excited and trembling, the Sanhedrists grouped in the vestibule, and the Priests chiding with word and gesture the slowness of the executioners.

At last, all was ready, and nothing remained but to begin the journey. At this moment, an officer approached the Procurator with a tablet of wood in his

[1] Matthew xxvii. 31; Mark xv. 30.

hand. It was the *titulus*,[1] the inscription which must be carried before Our Lord, and afterwards fixed to the Cross to inform all comers of the cause of His Death. Pilate remained for a moment musing before that little polished board, which was to become such a precious document for history; then, in a hoarse voice, he said to the clerk, —

"Write, Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews."[2]

Somewhat surprised, but silent, the scribe traced the inscription in three different kinds of characters, — Hebrew, Greek and Latin, — so that they might be intelligible to all who would see them.[3] Then, at a sign from his chief, he remitted it to the herald charged with opening the procession. This time all had ended well. The Galilæan was leaving the Antonia, never to return, but He left it full of His presence; and the retreat in which Pilate took shelter was illuminated by His glance, at once so mild and penetrating. According as He retired from the Fortress, the vision of Him therein became plainer, and the sound of His Footsteps lessening in the distance, re-echoed through it with ever-increasing distinctness. In vain the guilty judge stammered, "I am innocent of the Blood of this Just Man." The voice of the Just Man answered, "It is thou who hast delivered Me up," and amidst the terror of *a soul which was already Christian*, to use Tertullian's words,[4] he vainly sought means to appease the wrath which he had brought upon his head.

The sky, radiant until then, began to darken; mists

[1] Ἐπιγραφή of the Greeks. Compare SUETONIUS, *Caligula*, 32.

[2] JOHN xix. 19.

[3] Id. xix. 20. "And it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin." The letters were traced with red lead on the surface whitened with lime.

[4] TERTULLIAN, *Apologetic.*, 21. "Pilatus et ipse jam pro sua conscientia Christianus."

were gathering on all sides, like a veil drawn by a mysterious hand to hide from Heaven the sight of the crime consummated on earth. In the penumbra, lightnings were flashing, and low rumblings were heard, precursors of a convulsion of nature. Soon it would be the hour of noon, and the sentry of the guard at the donjon of the Antonia notified the arrival of the procession at the Gate of Justice, which led from the Lower City to Golgotha.

FIFTH BOOK

FROM THE ANTONIA TO CALVARY

CHAPTER I

THE VIA DOLOROSA

"And they put his own garments on him, and they led him out to crucify him." — MARK xv. 20.

"And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary." — JOHN xix. 17.

"And there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death." — LUKE xxiii. 32.

THE distance from the Antonia to Calvary is not very great. An ordinary walker can cover it in less than half an hour; in fact, it is not more than somewhat over six hundred yards, taking into account the turnings necessitated by the irregularity of the ground.[1]

From the traditional site of the Scala Santa to the Arch of the Ecce Homo, the distance is about eighty-three yards over shelving ground due to the raising of the earth around the Arch. The road then rapidly descends towards the Street Hôch-Ackhia-Beg, which runs from the Damascus Gate and forms an acute angle with the street by which travellers enter Jeru-

[1] Sepp reckons the Via Dolorosa as measuring half a Roman mile (*Vie de Jésus*, iii. p. 16), but we do not know from what source he has taken his information. "The number of paces equalled that of the years which had elapsed since the foundation of Rome."

salem.[1] This road is about one hundred and fifty yards long, and then nearly sixty yards more have to be traversed from northeast to southeast, before turning to the right in a westerly direction. At this turning, the Street Es-Seraï begins, ending about one hundred and fifty yards further on, at the ancient Gate of Judgment, the remains of which are pointed out just where the Street Bâb-el-Amoud intersects. A further journey of nearly the same distance would bring the pilgrim to Calvary, if he could follow the straight road, as was done in the time of Our Lord. But the buildings erected by Constantine, the Greeks, and the Mussulmans around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, now obstruct this space, the only part over which we can no longer really follow the Footsteps of Our Saviour.

It is a mistake to think that time has excessively changed the primitive aspect of these places, as those writers to whom we are indebted for the description of Jerusalem vie with one another in repeating. The "sixty or eighty feet of cinders and débris,"[2] which they are so fond of accumulating on the Via Dolorosa, may indeed be found below the Temple walls or in the lower Tyropœon Valley, but it would be difficult to find them on the declivity of the Antonia, or the ascent to the Gate of Judgment.

The same may be said of the "few feet"[3] which raise the ground on this route, and which it is difficult to discover, for instance, at the threshold of Saint Veronica's house. Because "the rock is level only" between Calvary[4] and the Holy Sepulchre, it does not follow that these are the only two points

[1] Before the Austrian Hospital. It is the route actually followed by the pilgrims, which is spoken of here.

[2] MARTIN, *La Passion*, pp. 257–258.

[3] See GUÉRIN, *La Terre Sainte*, p. 88.

[4] Id.

where the traces of the Divine Master are at present visible, and that "all the rest is mere conjecture." [1]

There is much that is incorrect and exaggerated in all this, whatever may be the opinion of the respected authors. No doubt "Jerusalem has greatly changed during eighteen centuries. It is folly to try to recognize the streets of the ancient city in those of the modern one." [2] But no such thing is necessary to reconstruct the actual appearance of the route followed by Our Lord.

The axis of the Arch of the Ecce Homo gives us that of the Lithostrotos, and determines the position of the Bema on which Pilate sat, and that of the Scala Santa by which access was had to the western gallery of the atrium of the Antonia. Around this Arch, it is true, we find that the ground has been raised, hiding from us the actual spot where the Jews cried out, "Crucify Him."

But the direction of the thoroughfare could not change, it is still in the axis of the Arch, and still descends the declivity of the Antonia by which people formerly ascended to the Citadel and the Temple. The subterranean Church of the Spasm, and its mosaic pavement give us the extent of the declivity, and point out the deviation which the road underwent in this quarter.

The position of the Gate of Judgment is sufficiently determined by the direction of the second wall, that which enclosed Acra, and the remains of which are found a few yards from the western side, along the present Bazaar, and in the new Russian buildings.[3] The axis of the gate fixes that of the road which

[1] ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Mémoire sur les instruments de la Passion*, p. 280.

[2] BOVET, *Voyage en Terre Sainte*, p. 12.

[3] To the east of the Holy Sepulchre, quite close to the Convent of Saint Abraham, which they threaten to annex.

leads to it, the Târiq-es-Seraï, of the present day, on which Saint Veronica's house opens. We have, therefore, made sure of the two great lines: the descent from the Antonia and the ascent to the Gate of Judgment. There can be no doubt about their junction, because it is inevitable from the very nature of the ground. It follows the course of the valley, and the considerable elevation of the ground in this quarter does not in the least alter the general aspect of the places.[1]

It is therefore another point gained, and we thus traverse the whole city, from the remote end of the Lithostrotos to the exterior wall, without quitting the Way of the Cross. But are we on the ancient level, or does the rubbish indeed separate us completely from the earth trodden by the Divine Feet?

At the Scala Santa we are evidently going downwards, and when we reach the Ecce Homo, we pass over the rubbish; under the Arch itself, are found the flagstones which were reddened with the Precious Blood, about five feet beneath the present surface.[2] At certain points on the route, — such as the lower end of the valley[3] before Veronica's house, under the Judgment Gate,[4] — we find the primitive level at various depths, but still sufficiently well marked to cause us the feeling of being in the immediate vicinity of Our Divine Lord. With Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre, where the traces of His Divine Presence are visible, is not this enough to satisfy our desires, when we remember all the ruin

[1] The raising of the ground may be estimated by the level of the subterranean Chapel of the Spasm.

[2] These flagstones have since been removed.

[3] In the subterranean Church of the Spasm.

[4] The Franciscans have cleared away the ground about the pillar, which is left standing, and the ancient surface has been found seven or eight feet below the present level.

and destruction which have come upon Jerusalem, and amidst which the road travelled by the new Isaac has remained untouched?

If we are surprised at the permanency of these roads, after so much devastation, let us not forget that it results from the force of circumstances. Agrippa did not alter them, and the Jews respected them until the siege of 68, because they suited the convenience of their fellow-citizens. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the only easy mode of access from the interior of the city to the valley of Jehosaphat must have been by the Bâb-Sitti-Mariam, the ancient Sheep-Gate, which is reached by passing under the Arch of the Ecce Homo, after having ascended the declivity of Gabbatha at the part where it is not too rugged, as at the foot of the western wall of the Temple.[1]

Adrian, who replaced the Jewish Hieron by a Pagan sanctuary, and Julian the Apostate, who dreamed of restoring the Altar of Jehovah, left things in the same state, and obliged every one to follow the accustomed path. The opposite declivity, the ascent to the Judgment Gate, must, for similar reasons, have remained the same,[2] whilst the surroundings of Calvary, where the ground was levelled for the construction of the Basilica of Constantine, lost their primitive aspect. Therefore, we must conclude that the roads

[1] JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.*, XV. xi. 5. When the Citadel of the Antonia was still standing, the street, at present called Hôch-Ackhia-Beg, opened into the square before the Prætorium. To get to the Sheep-Gate, people passed by the Porch of the Gentiles on the south, or went round the fosses of the Antonia on the north and the east. The destruction of the fortress improved the road, and made the thoroughfare still more useful and frequented. Therefore, there could have been no thought of changing the primitive direction.

[2] The direction certainly, and probably very nearly the level also, if not exactly, at the Gate itself, owing to the Siege of Titus, the repairs of Adrian, and the constructions of Constantine.

absolutely necessary for the traffic were cleared as often as they were obstructed, and, strange to say, care was taken to preserve their natural slope, instead of using the rubbish to make them level, which would have lessened the abruptness of the descent, and shortened the distance.

Nothing was easier at the bottom of the valley of Acra,[1] but the Oriental's conservatism has marvellously served the providential purpose of preserving for us the exact vision, so to speak, of Our Divine Saviour carrying His Cross. Why then should we erroneously object to this care, so full of tenderness, instead of profiting by it to revive our faith and our love?

Would it not be better to answer all those who raise objections, "Yes, I know it, but I cannot give it a thought. When I hear my Divine Lord named in the place where He died, I am awe-stricken by the overpowering sense of the reality."[2]

Let us, therefore, join the mournful procession, as near to the Divine Victim as we can, that we may lose none of the incidents of His Passion, nor of the lessons which they teach.

A centurion took the lead, in conformity with the ordinances of Roman Law.[3] He was obliged to preside at the execution, and maintain order amongst the crowd, with the help of his troop, who hedged round their Prisoner.

A herald walked beside him, carrying the inscrip-

[1] The difference of level in this case is due rather to a subsidence of the ground than to filling up. It is too slight for the supposition that the intention was to raise the bottom of the valley with a view to lessening the steepness of the adjacent declivities.

[2] BOVET, *Voyage en Terre Sainte*, 120.

[3] *Centurio supplicio præpositus* (Seneca). Tacitus calls him, *Exactor mortis;* Marie d'Agréda affirms that he was named *Quintus Cornelius* (*Cité mystique*, p. ii. Book vi. c. 21).

tion written by Pilate's order,[1] and sounding a trumpet to clear the way. The crowd retired before them, more mindful of the cross which was about to be laid on the Galilæan, than of the tablet whereon might be read the cause of His condemnation.

The appearance of Our Divine Lord under the great Arch of the Antonia was greeted with a cry of rage and hate. From the summit of the declivity, well in view of the entire square, He seemed already to command the whole world from the height of those clouds whence He will judge the living and the dead, with the Cross in His Arms as a symbol of Royalty. He surveyed the multitude with looks full of sweetness and of majesty. Tears were mingling on His cheeks with the Blood which trickled from His sacred Brow, a twofold call to repentance which they could no longer hear, but which gratified His Love. Then taking up the ignominious wood, He descended slowly, driven rather than aided by the executioners, bearing on His left shoulder the load which He must carry to Calvary.[2]

Roman usage thus prescribed. We learn so much from a sinister jest of Plautus, "Let him carry his cross through the city," he makes one of his characters say, "and then let him be fastened thereon."[3] Our Lord had often alluded to it before His diciples, when He spoke to them of taking up their cross and following Him.[4] This kind of punishment was not usual amongst the Jews; but the Romans inflicted it, and,

[1] SUETONIUS, *Caligula*, 32. "Præcedente titulo qui causam pœnæ indicaret."

[2] JOHN xix. 17. "And bearing his own cross, he went forth." Saint Bernard had great devotion to the Sacred Wound of Our Lord's left shoulder.

[3] "Patibulum ferat per urbem, deinde affigatur cruci" (*Nonius*, iii. 183). Compare PLUTARCH, *De sera Numin. vindicta*, § 9.

[4] MATTHEW xvi. 24; MARK viii. 34; LUKE xi. 23, etc.

since the annexation, instances of it were quite as frequent in Judea as in the other parts of the Empire. The Prophets had seen the Messiah advancing, loaded thus with the wood for His Sacrifice,[1] and perhaps there was some one amongst those then present who remembered the prediction. Alas! those on whom this duty devolved, the priests, whose office it was to explain to the people the figures and prophecies, had long thought of nothing but of distorting their meaning to suit their own passions. At that hour, the Scripture was a closed Book to them, wherein they could no more read the approaching Triumph of their Victim, than they could read the judgment with which God was striking their ministry and their Sanctuary. Meanwhile, Our Saviour slowly descended the slope towards Acra, rapidly becoming exhausted with His efforts to drag His load, growing heavier every moment. He staggered on, amidst jeers and mockery, tormented by the satellites who were pushing Him forward with their sticks, and by the crowd who threw dust and pebbles[2] at Him. The legionaries had difficulty in protecting Him from this violence in which the populace everywhere delight, but more especially Oriental mobs, which are like a pack of hounds, thirsting for blood and yelling round those who are going to die.

At the foot of the declivity there was, until very lately, a projection of the ground sufficiently high to be an obstacle to those ascending and a danger to those descending who were not free to control their movements.[3]

[1] GENESIS xxii. 6; ISAI. xxii. 22.

[2] Compare CATHERINE EMMERICH, *Douloureuse Passion*, xxvi. It is a feature of Oriental manners which can still be proved on occasion.

[3] It was there at the time of our pilgrimage to the Holy Places in 1885. When we revisited them in 1890, this irregularity in the ground was no longer there.

Was it thus in the time of Our Lord?

Who can tell? In any case, it is to this place that tradition points as the spot where Our Lord's first fall occurred. A false step caused Him to fall, and when He rose, all bruised, His strength failed Him, and He was unable to take up His burden again.

At this moment a man happened to pass, coming from the country by the road leading from the Damascus Gate, — a man amongst them all most fortunate, since for him was reserved the honor of bearing the Master's Cross, in His place and by His side. He was a stranger named Simon, who had come from Cyrene[1] with his two sons, Alexander and Rufus,[2] — a Pagan according to some,[3] and at most, a proselyte. He had taken no part in the mad deeds which had disgraced that morning, and when he saw Our Lord fall, he could not restrain a movement of commiseration,[4] perhaps even a protest against the roughness of the soldiers. That was enough to single him out for their attack. They seized him by the shoulder, and insisted that he should carry the cross of his chance client. Did he at first refuse?[5] We know nothing on this point, and we prefer to believe that he obeyed with a good grace. Besides, it was the best thing he could do, for resistance was dangerous.

The Romans were accustomed to these arbitrary requisitions. "If a soldier impose a task on you,"

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 32. "And going out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon, him they forced to take up his cross."

[2] MARK xv. 21. "Simon . . . the father of Alexander and of Rufus."

[3] Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Hilary, Theophilus, Saint Leo, etc. Compare LUDOLPH, *op. cit.*, lxii. 35.

[4] It is the general opinion, and the most probable.

[5] Some have thought so, but it is not the general sentiment.

says Arrian,[1] "take care not to resist or even to murmur. You would receive blows, and your ass would be taken from you into the bargain."

In this case, moreover, the crowd was behind the soldiers, ready to use violence towards the recalcitrant. Willing or unwilling, he must obey, and Simon resigned himself, not foreseeing the reward he would receive for his co-operation in the Redemption of the world.

He, therefore, took the Cross on his shoulder, and followed Our Lord,[2] whose step became lighter and quicker on more even ground, and in less stifling air. Just at that part there was a kind of cross-road, upon which the April sun was shining, its rays somewhat cooled by the haze, thus rendering them the more grateful to the Divine Sufferer.

The warmth restored a little animation to His chilled and exhausted veins, and, in the light, forms and colors grew more distinct before His eyes, dimmed with Blood. Thus, He was able to recognize a few paces from Him, in the midst of a group of friends, all too few, His Blessed Mother, supported by Magdalen and the Beloved Disciple.[3]

[1] ARRIAN, *Dissert.*, iv. 1. Compare PAULY, *Real Encyclopædie*, v. Ἄγγαρια.

[2] LUKE xxiii. 26. "And they laid the *cross on him to carry after Jesus*." We see by this text, which explains that of Saint Matthew and Saint Mark, that Simon did not carry the Cross simultaneously with Our Lord, but alone and behind. This opinion is accepted by all the Oriental Fathers, and by Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine, etc. Compare SAINT BRIDGET, *Revelation.*, lib. i. c. x. 9. "Unus assumpsit eam (crucem) portandam sibi."

[3] We place the meeting with Mary after the incident of Simon the Cyrenean, contrary to the order usually followed, because the latter does not seem to us very logical. At the crossing of the roads Simon, according to the first plan, would be well in sight and easily noticed; fifty yards further on, he would be lost in the crowd. Moreover, he might have been requisitioned before the meeting with Our Lady, and loaded with the Cross after that meeting. In this way, everything is

The Gospel does not mention this meeting, but tradition holds it for certain, and, truly, it would be strange if it did not take place. Mary must have tried to get near Her Divine Son as soon as she heard of His apprehension, and probably she succeeded in doing so near the Prætorium. The High Priests' house was closed against her, but access to the Roman Tribunal was free to every one. She could, therefore, be present at the awful scenes of the Scourging and of the washing of Pilate's hands. She could hear the yells of the crowd and Pilate's remonstrances. Finally, she could see Her Divine Son when He came forth from the Antonia, and could learn the route He was to follow. This is how we meet Her at the end of a kind of lane, parallel to the Via Dolorosa, which she rejoined about fifty yards from the point where Our Divine Lord fell the first time.[1]

Did she arrive in time to witness Her Divine Son prostrate in the dust, and endeavoring to rise under the weight of His load, or did she only see the Cross being lifted off Him, and placed on the Cyrenean's shoulders? It matters little in presence of the immensity of Her sorrow. Often has the attempt been made to depict it; but always with the same success. Why attempt the impossible? Has not the Prophet said of the Daughter of Sion, "To what shall I compare thee, or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what shall I

settled without any difficulty on account of the short time which intervenes and renders the two meetings almost simultaneous. There is nothing positive in the traditional order of the incidents in the Way of the Cross. LUDOLPH (*Vita Christi*, c. lxii. 34–35) places the meeting with the women of Jerusalem before the meeting with the Cyrenean.

[1] LUDOLPH, *Vita Christi*, 2d part, c. lxii. 33. "Maria ivit celeriter per aliam viam breviorem et compendiosam."

equal thee that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? for great as the sea is thy destruction; who shall heal thee?"[1] And has he not placed these words on the lips of the mysterious mourner? "All ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."[2]

The sword foretold by Simeon had been buried in her breast, and had rent her heart.[3] To fathom the depth of the Wound would require the Eye of Him who held the sword and who made His Mother co-redemptrix of the human race.

The soldiers must have paused for a moment, perhaps, to permit of the Cross being transferred to the Cyrenean, perhaps, also, from a feeling of commiseration for the afflicted One. Hard as it was to touch their hearts, could they remain unmoved at this unforeseen meeting between the Mother and the Son, on the road to Calvary? For the honor of humanity, let us not refuse to allow them a remnant of mercy and respect, at the sight of such fearful desolation, and of such bitter sorrow.[4] In the time of Tiberius, the Roman soldier had long been accustomed to take life without the least scruple, but he struck by order, and believed that he was fulfilling a duty. Cæsar had never yet conceived the addition of that refinement of sorrow and torture to the capital punishment, *pereuntibus addita ludibria*, as Tacitus says.[5]

All that was the work of the Jews, and perhaps the contempt which the legionaries felt for the victors aroused in them a feeling of pity for the vanquished.

[1] LAMENTATIONS ii. 13.

[2] Id. i. 12.

[3] LUKE ii. 35. "Thy own soul, a sword shall pierce."

[4] LUDOLPH, *loc. cit.* Compare FARRAR, *Life of Christ*, p. 438; Mme. DE GASPARIN, *Jésus*, p. 347.

[5] TACITUS, *Annal.*, xv. 44. Compare PLAUTUS, *Mostellaria*, 52–55.

Be this as it may, Jesus and Mary exchanged looks in which their whole souls went out to each other with a force of compassion and tenderness which it is impossible for us to measure. They united once more in renouncing their whole being for the benefit of mankind, and the glory of the Eternal Father. Nevertheless, tradition asserts that the poor Mother grew faint beneath the weight of the sacrifice, as Her Divine Son had grown faint in the Garden of Olives.[1]

There is nothing surprising in this, nor is there anything which lessens the grandeur of Mary's soul, or Her perfect submission to the Divine Will. The weakness of nature attests the violence of the ordeal, without lessening the merit of the resignation.

Our Divine Lord had passed on, when Mary came to herself; more than ever was she determined, with the help of the Holy Women, to follow Him. He had turned to the right, and was now ascending the road which led to the Judgment Gate, one of those narrow, dark, dirty streets such as one often sees in the cities of the East.

Our Divine Lord found it hard to climb the slope, for His strength was failing more and more. The heat was oppressive; the stifling dust-laden atmosphere rendered it almost impossible to breathe under the arches which at every moment intercepted the view of the sky.[2]

The crowd was continually increasing, lining the whole length of the road, standing at the doors, obstructing the way in front, and pressing on the

[1] LUDOLPH, *Vita Christi*, *loc. cit.* "Imo dicitur in terram corruisse."

[2] This is the modern aspect of this street, and there is every reason to believe that it differs very little from the ancient one. In any case, it suits admirably the scene which we are describing. Compare BOVET, *Voyage en Terre Sainte*, p. 120.

cortège from behind. The air resounded with mingled calls, jeers, sarcasm, and cries of fear, which came from the *moucharabichs* behind which the women concealed their curiosity,[1] some of them scared, others cruel, according as they had formerly taken part for or against the Nazarene.

From time to time, the centurion ordered his men to clear the way for the Prisoner by a vigorous charge into the mass, which, crushed and trampled on, shrieked with pain, hooted the soldiers, and threatened the officer. The latter, unmoved, resumed his march, his hand on his sword, and only restrained from charging that rabble by fear of an adventure which might ruin Rome's prestige and the Procurator's fortune.

We have not yet said anything of the Chief Priests and the Sanhedrists, as if they had taken no part in this mournful procession. It would be well if we could believe that they were absent, not because their absence would acquit them, but because it would seem to lessen their crime. Unfortunately, the Gospel attests the contrary, Saint John[2] and Saint Luke[3] are so precise on this point that our hearts ache. Those whom they name as the leaders of the procession are indeed the very same "to whom Pilate delivered the Divine Victim," the accusers in the Prætorium, the judges of Mount Sion, the assessors of Caiaphas; Scribes, Priests, and Ancients. They are all there.

They wished to enjoy their triumph to the full, by parading at the head of the people whom they

[1] PROVERBS vii. 6. "For I looked out of the window of my house, *through the lattice*." Compare CATHERINE EMMERICH, *Douloureuse Passion*.

[2] JOHN xix. 16. "And they took Jesus, and led him forth."

[3] LUKE xxiii. 26. "And as they led him away."

preceded on their white mules, richly caparisoned,[1] inciting the multitude to clamor for the death of their Victim and enjoying with zest their acclamations.

The legionaries, who despised them, did not in the least refrain from maltreating them in those charges ordered by the centurion. Then they darted glances full of wrath and hatred at those representatives of a foreign power, and they muttered maledictions against Rome and Cæsar. Ah! their pride suffered indeed at being thus obliged to appear submissive to the yoke; could it deceive itself as to this fresh humiliation which it brought upon itself before all the people? But did they then too dearly purchase the pleasure of trampling underfoot their enemy whom Pilate condemned to the punishment inflicted on the most hateful criminals? Compared with this joy all the rest was nothing, — their country betrayed, their religion profaned, God blasphemed, the honor of the past repudiated with their hopes, both for the present time and the future eternity.

And they went along with uplifted heads, undisturbed by the lowering desolate look of nature, beneath a sky growing darker and darker. The day would soon reach its meridian, and yet the sun seemed to be lessening in radiance as it approached the zenith.

Not a breath stirred the atmosphere, and the thousand usual sounds of space were gradually dying away, giving place to an ominous silence. What thunder-bolt was about to rend asunder those veils?

What rumbling thunder was going to break that stillness? What loud-voiced convulsion was about to shake that torpor?

[1] It is the traditional mount for civil functionaries, distinguished personages, either of religious or judicial rank. Compare NUM. xxii. 22; JUD. i. 14; II KINGS xvii. 23; III KINGS xiii. etc.

The centurion alone, perhaps, in that multitude, was asking himself these things in a sort of religious awe, and with his eyes turned towards his Prisoner, he was beginning to say to himself, "Indeed this Man was the Son of God."

CHAPTER II

VERONICA AND THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

"And there followed him a great multitude of people and of women, who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus, turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." — LUKE xxiii. 27–28.

MEANWHILE, the Divine Prisoner was ascending the declivity. Sweat streamed from His Sacred Brow. He was shivering with the chill of fever, and it seemed as if the least aggravation of His mortal weakness would cause Him to breathe forth His last sigh.

At times, even the soldiers were obliged to support Him, or rather to carry Him, as Saint Mark says expressly.[1] When half-way up the ascent, He grew faint, and allowed Himself to fall near a humble dwelling, the door of which was immediately opened.[2] A woman appeared, holding in her hands a cloth soaked in cold water, which she respectfully applied to the Divine Master's Face, covered as It was with a layer of dust caked in Blood and Tears. Revived by this act of compassion, Our Lord Himself wiped His Sacred Brow with the towel offered to Him, and then returned it, with a glance of Divine gratitude.

[1] MARK xv. 22. Καὶ *φέρουσιν αὐτόν.* "*They carry him,*" Greek version. The translation, "And they lead him, *Perducunt illum,*" authorized by some manuscripts, is clearly wanting in exactness.

[2] Veronica's house still exists. It belongs to the United Greeks, who are working at present to transform it into a sanctuary of the Holy Face. It is entered by three steps downwards from the street, which leads to the conclusion that the upper ground has been raised.

All this was done with the rapidity of thought. The soldiers pushed the woman away, whilst the executioners raised the Divine Victim. The door was quickly closed again, to shelter from insult the woman who dared, in spite of the Pharisaical ordinances, to testify sympathy with the "Seducer."

Is it owing to this rapidity that there is no record of the incident in the early narration? The Gospels do not speak of it, nor is there any mention of it in the *Apocryphals*, otherwise so rich in details more or less admitted.

It would seem as if no one knew of this meeting between the Master and His lowly servant; neither John, pre-eminently the Evangelist of Our Lord's interior life, nor Mark, whose mother, it is said, was amongst the holy women, nor that Nicodemus, to whom we are indebted for so many curious documents on the life and time of Our Saviour, together with an *Apocryphal Gospel*.

Following their example, the greater number of the ancient witnesses to tradition are silent. Ludolph the Carthusian, who compiled the legends and revelations with so much care and intelligence, does not even allude to this act of charity. Nor does Saint Bridget mention it either. Eusebius, it is true, traces in this woman the Phœnician whom Our Divine Lord[1] cured of the issue of blood. And the *Chronicle* of Julian places her abode sometimes at Cæsarea, sometimes at Jerusalem. Marianus Scotus in the eleventh century, and Bernard Guidonis in the fourteenth, collected materials to form a history of this subject, in which the marvellous seems to usurp the place of probability, and Catherine Emmerich's[2] approval of it does not suffice to give it

[1] MATTHEW ix. 20–22; LUKE viii. 43–48.
[2] *Douloureuse Passion*, passim.

the authority which it lacks. Marie d'Agréda *saw* nothing corresponding to this incident; an evident proof of the absence of any Spanish tradition relative to the service rendered to Our Divine Redeemer as He ascended to Calvary by a compassionate woman.

Hence it is that several Catholic writers have said that this tradition, a very ancient one according to Sepp,[1] was of comparatively recent date,[2] which explains the intentional omission of this detail by the most authentic historians, — Fouard, Le Camus, Chevallier, and others.

Needless to say, that the Protestants reject it as one of the "Apocryphal traditions of the Romish Church,"[3] while the Rationalists do not deign to notice it even.

Meanwhile, we cannot proceed without giving some attention to the assertion of Eusebius who testifies to the ancient Oriental belief. In fact, from the fourth century, we have historical warrant for what we have narrated.

Is it sufficient to carry conviction? First of all, it is of importance to remark that there is nothing improbable or unbecoming in this story, quite the contrary. What the Gospel itself tells us of the compassion of the Women of Jerusalem is quite in harmony with Veronica's compassion; and it was a perfectly natural impulse which led her to refresh Our Lord's Sacred Face. But this probability and this fitness would not suffice for the acceptance of the legend, if it were not interwoven with a collection of facts and beliefs which must necessarily be taken into consideration.

[1] *Vie de Jésus*, iii. p. 18.

[2] Bonnetty, *Documents historiques*, iv. p. 970; De Buck, *Manuel*, p. 211.

[3] Farrar, *Life of Christ*, p. 438.

The constant tradition of the Gallic churches attributes their foundation to Our Lord's first disciples, amongst whom this woman is placed,[1] christened Veronica by the most fantastic play upon language,[2] and who should have been simply called Berenice. None but the most prejudiced will deny her existence, for it is indisputable, and, once admitted, it involves the reality of the legend relative to the meeting with Our Blessed Lord on the way to Calvary. Indeed, the Veronica or Berenice of the Gauls is specially known from the fact of her having wiped Our Divine Lord's Sacred Face, near the Gate of Judgment. This fact, for the invention of which there was no motive, is to be found, hallowed by a particular devotion, in all the narratives of the Passion used by Pilgrims to the Holy Land. Finally, the Church in Rome claims, from time immemorial, to be in possession of the towel used to refresh Our Divine Lord's Sacred Brow, and offers it to the veneration of the faithful with such solemnities that it is impossible not to be touched thereby.

We could not, therefore, in this *Essay on the Passion*, omit such an incident, and, to give it due prominence, we must make our readers better acquainted with Veronica, and give some details about the veil which she has bequeathed to our devotion.

Veronica's origin is very difficult to determine exactly. According to the Legend of Cénebrun she was born in Phœnicia,[3] an opinion shared by Lucas de Bruges, contrary to the author of the *Baptista Salvatoris*, who says she was a native of Polytheba, in

[1] *Gallic Martyrology*, 15th February. See D. AURELIAN, *Sainte Véronique et l'apôtre Saint Martial.*

[2] From *Vera* and Εἰκών, true image, as people gravely assert, without thinking of the singularity of coupling a Latin word with Greek. Veronica is a form of pronunciation of Berenice, Βερονίκη.

[3] "Phenix." See *Florimond de Lesparre*, published by M. RABANIS.

Mesopotamia,[1] but the Girondin tradition asserts that she was a Gaul by birth, and a Pagan who, after a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, became a proselyte, and, finally, a follower of Jesus Christ. According to this hypothesis, she would be related to one of the Gauls who had taken service at the court of the first Herod, and it must have been the desire of seeing her relative again which brought her to Palestine. Gregory of Tours[2] adheres to this opinion, and it is now generally received. The reader will pardon us this enumeration of evidence on account of the glory which Veronica's merits confer on the place of her birth. It is sweet to think that on the morning of the 14th Nisan, the mercenaries of Antipas were not the sole representatives of Gaul, and that the piety of a daughter of the West gave the impulse and the example to that of the daughters of Jerusalem.

According to the Girondin tradition, Veronica assisted at the Festival of the Pasch in the year 31 of Our Lord, and, thanks to her connection with Herod's suite,[3] had the happiness of receiving at Machærus, the bleeding remains of the Precursor. From that time, she remained in Palestine, and married Zachary the publican,[4] and after the conversion of the latter, she settled in Jerusalem, where we find her kneeling before the Divine Master as He is led to Calvary. Veronica's act indeed merited a reward, and she received one, magnificent beyond all imagination. When, hav-

[1] *Op. cit.*, book ii. c. vi. Compare BOLLANDISTS, *Act. SS.*, 4th February.

[2] *De Gloria Martyrum*, "Quædam satis egregii nominis matrona, Vasatensis urbis indigena, Jerosolymis forte degebat."

[3] *Baptista Salvatoris*, book ii. c. vi. Cit. GREGORY OF TOURS, *De Gloria Martyrum*. Compare CATHERINE EMMERICH, *Révélations*.

[4] BERNARD GUID., *Chronic.* Zachary bears in the Gallic legend the name of Amadon or Amadour. The foundation of the Sanctuary of Notre-Dame de Roc-Amadour in the diocese of Cahors, is attributed to him.

ing re-entered her dwelling, still trembling with emotion and fear, the pious woman unfolded the cloth whereon she expected to find traces of blood, she perceived, clearly outlined on it, the August Countenance of the Saviour. The livid Brow, the closed Eyelids, the bruised Cheeks, the swollen Lips, the soiled Beard, seemed painted on the cloth by a powerful hand who had sketched them in bold strokes, as if rather preoccupied with the general effect, to which was added the sombre tints of the whole.

Veronica hastened to conceal her treasure in a coffer of wood which was still preserved, in the time of Baronius,[1] in the Church of Sainte Marie des Martyrs. But she could not long retain it for herself. Transported to Rome, in the time of Tiberius,[2] the *Santo Volto* — Holy Face — remained there in the hands of the early Christians, who faithfully transmitted it to succeeding generations, and it became the property of the Vatican Basilica, where it remains at present. Every year, during Holy Week, it is shown to the people from the balcony of the chapel, called Saint Helena's Chapel, beneath the cupola of Saint Peter. Unfortunately, it is seen at too great a distance to admit of the faithful venerating it at ease, but there are copies of it scattered over the Catholic world.

Quite recently, in our own days,[3] the mysterious image, which was nearly effaced, became illuminated with supernatural effulgence, and the witnesses of this momentary restoration are agreed that the representation of the Divine Face is fairly reproduced in the traditional copies, with the exception of the eyes,

[1] ANNALES, *ad ann.* 33.

[2] PHILIPPE DE BERGAME, *Chroniques* (supplement). A curious vignette in the *Heures* de Simon Vostré, represents Veronica presenting the Holy Face to Our Lady and the Holy Women.

[3] The 6th January, 1849.

which were replaced by two stains, or cavities.[1] By the development of the Forehead it is easy to see that Our Lord was not wearing the Crown of Thorns at the moment of His meeting with Veronica. Several of the "*Seers*," "*Voyantes*,"[2] also, thought this was the case. In fact, from its shape, it must have come down to the eyes,[3] and unless we suppose that it had fallen (which is not at all likely), it would have hidden Our Divine Lord's Forehead. Certainly it was not any feeling of pity which induced them to remove the Crown of Thorns and replace it by the traditional cap and keffiyeh. But in the middle of April, the heat of the sun is usually intense, and a sunstroke was possible.

It was to be feared that the Prisoner, especially in His state of weakness, would never reach the place of punishment alive, or at least conscious. Hatred became compassionate that it might the better satisfy itself, and Our Lord's Divine Head was relieved of its painful diadem, of no use to protect Him from the burning rays of the sun. But it would have to be put on again at the moment of the Crucifixion to justify the title of King inscribed at the top of the Cross.

Carried, rather than led by His executioners, Our Lord soon passed through the Judgment Gate, opened in the second wall which at that time enclosed the city on the east.

A copy of the sentence pronounced against the King of the Jews was attached to one of the pillars.

[1] GRIMOUARD DE SAINT-LAURENT, *Manuel de l'art chrétien*, p. 154.

[2] See SAINT BRIDGET, *Révélations*, book i. c. x. and C. EMMERICH, *Douloureuse Passion*, XXV. Marie d'Agréda (*Cité Mystique*, v. 116) is of Tertullian's opinion (*Adv., Jud.*, c. xiii.), who reproduces the Apocryphal Gospel narrative of Nicodemus, according to which Our Lord wore the Crown of Thorns from the Prætorium to Calvary.

[3] SAINT BRIDGET says: "Ad medium frontis descendebat."

A short pause was necessary, during which, according to tradition, the Divine Victim again swooned. Then, having passed through the Gate, the procession reached the open country, at the foot of the declivity the summit of which bore the name of Golgotha or Calvary.

It was customary, from the remotest times, to execute capital sentences outside the wall of the city, *extra civitatem*, or the camp, *extra castra*,[1] whether from a desire to avoid defiling inhabited places, or with the intention of providing for a larger number of spectators by carrying out this act of justice in a vaster and more accessible space. Thus it was that the blasphemer in *Leviticus*, and the robber in the *Book of Joshua*, were led outside the Israelite camp to be stoned.

The *Talmud* had reduced to a precept what was probably only a custom, and the *Acts* show us the Jews dragging Saint Stephen outside the walls to put him to death.[2]

It does not appear that there was any specially appointed place of execution in Jerusalem. The highroads seem to have been chosen by preference, especially at those parts where they were overlooked by some eminence in the vicinity of the ramparts. The passers-by had the spectacle of satisfied justice before their eyes, sometimes for several days, and even at times for months, as happened to those sons of Saul whose mortal remains Rizpah defended so bravely from the jackals and vultures.[3]

[1] LEVITICUS xxiv. 23. "Without the camp;" HEBREW xiii. 12. "Without the gate." Compare PLAUTUS, *Miles glorios.*, ii., "*Extra portam.*"

[2] ACTS APOSTLES vii. 57. "And casting him forth without the city they stoned him."

[3] II KINGS xxi. 8–11.

The Gate of Judgment was the thoroughfare for travellers from Damascus, from Joppa, Bethlehem, and Gaza. Great throngs of people were perpetually passing to and fro, and the adjacent rising ground seemed specially marked out for the mournful scene about to be enacted.

Meanwhile, Our Lord soon entered on the path which, towards the left, ascended a scarcely perceptible spur of the little hill of Gareb, crowned by a bare plateau, whence it acquired the name of Calvary, or the bare Mount.[1] Just as He entered the path, He passed a group of women whose tearful eyes sufficiently testified their sympathy with the Prisoner's sufferings.[2] Like Veronica, they paid no heed to the prohibition of the Rabbis against any mark of sympathy with criminals on their way to execution.[3] Men, especially Orientals, who are accustomed to appear unmoved, find it easy to restrain themselves in the presence of torture and of death, when it is a question of an unknown individual, and, still more, a wretch justly punished for his crimes. Their hearts are scarcely stirred by an impulse of pity for the unfortunate creature, whilst their eyes have no looks nor their lips no words of sympathy. But can woman bring herself to this state of concentration, so little in harmony with her nature?

If, unhappily, she has any reason or pretext for hating the sufferer, she is capable of every violence and every insult in his regard. Feminine hatred, as displayed towards unfortunate victims on their way to the scaffold, causes the spectator to shudder.

[1] Like our hills of Chaumont, where was formerly the gibbet of *Montfaucon*, Calvary translates Golgotha which means exactly, *The place of skulls.*

[2] LUKE xxiii. 27. "And there followed him a great multitude of people and of women, who bewailed and lamented him."

[3] TALMUD of Babylon, *Sanhedrim*, vi.

But, in the same way, when a woman loves or admires the victim, nothing can equal in tenderness the manifestation of her heart. Between these two extremes, natural sensitiveness, an instinctive horror of blood, and a superstitious respect for death, are so many reasons for a woman to regard as sacred the one upon whom the executioner has laid his hands. The "*res sacra miser*" of the ancients is written in the deepest depths of her soul; and she would regard it as sacrilege to remain unmoved in in the presence of such agony.

Besides, the Scribes, who cannot be suspected of respect for women or compassion for misery, had allowed the ladies of Jerusalem to prepare a drink which partly stupefied the criminals, and dulled their sensibility to suffering.[1] Jealous of this privilege, the heiresses of the noblest families constituted it a duty to prepare the wine mixed with myrrh or frankincense which the executioners offered to their victims at the moment of execution. Perhaps the holy women assembled on the way to Calvary, had fulfilled the pious office and were bringing to Calvary the beverage which the Sanhedrim allowed. The sacred text does not permit us to confound them with those women who usually followed Our Divine Lord's preaching, and whom we shall soon meet again, grouped around Mary at the Foot of the Cross. However, they may have been amongst the number of the Master's disciples who had more or less openly confessed themselves as such. They placed themselves on His route, to offer Him a last testimony of their fidelity, and not merely to weep over His Immolation with commonplace compassion. Saint Luke

[1] *Sanhedrim*, vi. It is supposed, with some show of probability, that the mother of the Evangelist, Saint Mark, was amongst the number of pious women devoted to this ministry.

evidently says more by recalling their sighs and weeping, inasmuch as their sympathy was not without danger for themselves and their children.

Jesus heard them, and regarded them with a look, benevolent, yet sad. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me," He said, in a voice which was almost stern, "but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us: and to the hills: Cover us. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry." [1]

It was the first time He had broken silence since leaving the Prætorium, and what might seem strange, He borrowed His language, almost word for word, from the Prophet Hosea.

As if to render it more impressive and effective, [2] He seemed already to behold the Deicide City, surrounded on all sides,[3] exhausting herself in vain efforts against the Romans under Titus, whilst awaiting the hour of the supreme catastrophe wherein should perish the Temple and the nation. He heard the cries of the children vainly asking for bread,[4] the cries of the mothers, regretting that they had not remained barren; [5] and the yells of the last combatants falling [6] in the caves of Moriah, by the merciless sword of the legionaries.

[1] LUKE xxiii. 28–31.

[2] HOSEA ix. 14, x. 8.

[3] LUKE xix. 43. "Thy enemies . . . and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side."

[4] LAMENT. iv. 4. "The little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them."

[5] MATTHEW xxiv. 19. "And wo to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days."

[6] LUKE xxi. 24. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword."

But the voice had no longer that tone of pity, so easily recognized, four days before, in His lamentations over Jerusalem, then still capable of repentance. To-day, the cup was full.

For Sion, it was too late, as it was for Gomorrah, for which not even the prayer of the Just Man any longer availed to obtain pardon.[1]

These women would be able soon to verify the prophecy, for the hour of its fulfilment was at hand. The children whom they were carrying in their arms would enter the furnace, therein to struggle and to die, unless saved by special protection of a Providence grown sparing of mercy and salvation. The more painful the effort was for Him to speak, the more heavily fell each word on the souls of the Daughters of Jerusalem. A mournful stupor seized them, as if already the sword was raised over their heads in the ever-increasing darkness which was spreading over the sky.

But the lesson borne over their heads to the farthest ends of the earth was clearly meant to excite souls to repentance and to return to God. As He had made the occasion of the prophecy uttered against Jerusalem in presence of His disciples, an opportunity to announce to all the Last Judgment, so now, in speaking to the Women of Jerusalem, He addressed Himself to all those whom God's justice is about to strike, whilst they seem to have no suspicion of the impending blow.

"Weep not over me," He says to us, "I do not need your sighs or useless tenderness. Sinners, weep; weep over yourselves!" Why should we weep over ourselves? *Quia si in viridi ligno hæc faciunt, in arido quid fiet?* "For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" "If the

[1] Genesis xviii. 23, xix. 21.

fire of Divine Vengeance has seized so fiercely and so quickly on this green and fruitful wood," [1] — "if this living wood; if Jesus Christ, this fruitful tree which bears such beautiful fruit, is not spared, O sinner, dry wood, wood plucked up by the roots, only fit for everlasting flames, what have you to expect? . . . What does it profit us, O Christians, that Jesus Christ has cried for us to His Father, if, notwithstanding we perish surrounded by the mysteries of our salvation, and within sight of the Cross, by neglecting to avail ourselves of the graces which it offers to us." [2] Most undoubtedly, He does not reject our pity,[3] however useless it may be, as Bossuet says, but He cries out to us, "Have pity on your own souls by laboring to please God." [4] Though He could no longer save the faithless city, He can always save us; and that is the reason He invites us to reflect upon our danger, instead of uselessly lamenting His sorrows.

Having uttered these words of warning, Our Divine Lord passed on, followed by the two thieves who were condemned to die with Him, at the same hour, and by the same death; then came the escort, the Sanhedrists, and the people, as many of them as could find room on the slope of Calvary.

Lost in the seething mass, Our Lady and her companions were trying to get near the Divine Sufferer. Their veils protected them from the rudeness of the mob, as they were driven hither and thither at the mercy of the surging multitude. They were in hopes of finding themselves more at liberty after the Crucifixion, when the masses, having satisfied their curiosity, would disperse, leaving around the gibbet only

[1] Bossuet, *Premier sermon pour le vendredi saint.*

[2] Id., *Quatrième sermon pour le vendredi saint.*

[3] Ludolph, *op. cit.*, lxxii. 34. "Non ergo prohibet Dominus compassionem."

[4] Eccles. xxx. 24. "Have pity on thy own soul, pleasing God."

the friends of His last hour. Whilst awaiting this, they wanted to be as near as possible to Him for Whom they could do nothing, Who could not even see them, but Whose Divine Heart, they felt, was more closely united than ever to theirs.

There was a halt. The procession had reached the plateau of Calvary, to which the Roman Guard would allow no access. The Sanhedrists made a circuit which brought them right in front of their victim; some of the people followed them; and the Holy Women found themselves, by this means, almost in the foremost rank of spectators behind the line of soldiers.

Our Lady was not more than two paces from Her Divine Son; around Her gathered Magdalen, Martha,[1] Salome, Mary of Cleophas, Susanna; and others, together with the Beloved Disciple, who upheld the Virgin Mother.[2]

The shoving of the crowd now and then provoked the escort to repel them, and then the sorrowing group found themselves driven back, but still never losing sight of the Divine Victim. By degrees, quiet was restored on that side, the majority having sought a more convenient place for obtaining a good view, or, perhaps, where they could more easily insult the dying seducer. The Gospel notes, with heartrending exactness, the incidents which marked this last halting place, and not without reason. Are they not so many swords which, according to the prophecy of

[1] The Gospel does not mention Martha among the Holy Women who were on Calvary, but every tradition places her there, with an appearance of probability which amounts to certainty.

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 55; MARK xv. 40; LUKE xxiii. 49; JOHN xix. 25. Tradition points out the place where Mary stood at the moment of the crucifixion; it is in perfect accord with the nature of the ground. Compare SAINT BRIDGET, *Révélation*, lib. i. c. x.; CATHERINE EMMERICH, *Douloureuse Passion*, xxix. etc.

Holy Simeon, now but too faithfully realized, bury themselves deep in Mary's Heart.[1]

It was noon-day. A suffocating heat rendered Calvary and the narrow valley surrounding it a perfect furnace, with the leaden sky for a cover.

In the partial eclipse, like spectres or demons, were gesticulating those priests who were blaspheming the Son of God, those doctors who were mocking the Eternal Wisdom, those Ancients who were invoking ruin and malediction upon Israel.

Amidst the silence of nature, the mockeries of the Jews, the cries of the women, and the calling of the executioners sounded still more terrible; whilst over all dominated the centurion's voice, as he gave his orders in accents of smothered wrath against this people, and those who had incited them to rebellion.

Almost at his feet, prostrated by weakness, Our Divine Saviour was lying, close to the Cross, His executioners having, for the moment, forgotten Him, occupied as they were with the final preparations. The hour had come in which Hell was to make its supreme effort, and in which Death was to be swallowed up at the moment when it thought to triumph over the Messiah.

[1] LUKE ii. 35. "And thy own soul, a sword shall pierce."

CHAPTER III

CALVARY AND THE CROSS

"He is accursed of God, that hangeth on a tree." — DEUTER. xxi. 23.

"He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." — PHILIP. ii. 8.

WHAT is usually called the mountain of Calvary is, in reality, a hill, or rather a rocky elevation from about fourteen to seventeen feet high.[1] On the southeast it was approached by a gentle ascent, on the east the rock, on the contrary, had been cut away almost perpendicularly, and an excavation had been hollowed in it, to which was given later the name of Adam's Tomb.[2] The whole had, thus, the form of a promontory, bounded on three sides by ravines of unequal depth, that on the north seeming to be deeper than the others.

Two cisterns, one almost on a level with the ground, the other sunk in the sides of the rock, were at that time dry, as appears from the traditions attached to them.[3]

To the west, at the foot of the steep declivity, a

[1] As near as we can now judge.

[2] SAINT JEROME (*Epist.* xlvi. 3) has done justice to the fancy which placed the graves of our first parents in that place. The Book of JOSHUA (xiv. 15) places it at Cariath-Arbe, called afterwards Hebron, where also rest the ashes of Abraham.

[3] The first is pointed out as having served as a prison for the time being for our Lord; the instruments of the Passion were placed in the second, after the Descent from the Cross, as we shall see later.

road led through gardens, in one of which might be seen the tomb destined for one of the wealthiest of the Sanhedrists, Joseph of Arimathea. It was on the side of a hill not quite so high as Calvary, and which was covered with verdure. In fact, this was the quarter of the villas and orchards where cool shade might be always found in summer, and which at all seasons presented a cheerful aspect.

It was a favorite resort of pedestrians, especially on the Sabbath, owing to its proximity to the city, and the pilgrims' tents which arose in its vicinity at festival times added to the peaceful animation of this vast suburb.

Calvary, notwithstanding its lugubrious name, did not detract from this smiling landscape, continually surrounded as it was by groups of travellers, — pilgrims, tourists, merchants, — entering or leaving the city with their picturesque travelling paraphernalia, and wending their way slowly through the bustling confusion peculiar to frequented thoroughfares in the East. But it does not seem to have been the usual place of execution, although suited for it by its situation.[1] The Jews, in fact, were in the habit of taking their criminals to some steep-crested height whence they could be precipitated, if they were to be stoned to death, as was usually the case. The executioners waited at the foot of the rock until the victims were thus thrown down; when they received them, half-dead, and gave them the death-blow with stones.[2]

Those who suffered death by crucifixion were

[1] However, some, amongst whom are Saint Jerome and the Venerable Bede, suppose the contrary; but this opinion, already combated by Saint Cyril, does not seem justified. Saint Jerome rightly rejects the idea that the name of *Calvary*, "skull," is due to the burial of Adam in that same place.

[2] *Sanhedrim*, iv. and vi. Compare STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 112.

executed by the wayside with the special view of exhibiting them to the passers-by; but this was rather the Roman custom, and the Jews left the work and the arrangements to those employed by the Procurator.

Calvary was evidently chosen on the 14 Nisan, because it invested the execution of the Nazarene with special importance. A blasphemer and a false prophet, Jesus was brought to a place suited for the infliction of death by stoning; pretending to royalty, He was hung upon one of those gibbets, easily seen from afar, of which Ennius speaks in mockery; [1] a disturber of the people, He must die there where the greater number could witness His punishment, while at the same time the crowd would not obstruct the approach to the Temple. For which purpose, Calvary was admirably suited, with its elevated plateau, visible from all sides, from the city, the highways, the declivities, easy of access, and with its terraced sides for those spectators who were nearest to the scene. Besides, and who can say that this was not the predominating reason, it was on the high-road to Galilee, and the tents of the pilgrims from that despised region were clustered round about.

Should not Jerusalem proclaim her vengeance on the very road by which the partisans of Him Who scorned her, passed to the Temple? There was no longer anything to fear from that flock dispersed by the blow which had struck the Shepherd.[2] If one of them came to the foot of Calvary, he would receive in silence the lesson which the madness of his error deserved.

[1] Ap. SEPP, *Vie de Jésus*, vol. iii. p. 22. He there describes the envious man tormented by the fear of dying on a gibbet less elevated than that of his rival.

[2] MATTHEW xxvi. 31. "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed."

Meanwhile, the Cross had just been thrown on the ground by the Cyrenean,[1] and the executioners began the work of fastening to it Our Divine Lord. On this point, the Gospel is strangely laconic.

"They crucified Him; *Crucifixerunt eum.*"[2] That is all. It might seem quite a simple matter, almost insignificant, if we did not reflect that these three words sufficed, in those days, to describe the most fearful of sights. Cicero did not wish that the name of the Cross should be uttered in a free city,[3] and, according to Apuleius, this punishment was the climax of humiliation and suffering.[4]

The Cross originally came from the banks of the Euphrates, where, it is said, Semiramis erected it for the first time in the form of the pale or stake, to which the criminal was nailed[5] by the hands and feet. From this primitive form were derived the multipled variations of this instrument of death. In the beginning, the pale supported a cross-beam whence hung the victim, his arms extended as if in vain supplication.[6] Then the cross-beam was lowered, so as to permit of the sentence which condemned the sufferer being affixed to the cross above his head.

This is our ordinary cross, the Latin cross, so named because the Romans used it in preference to all others. Sometimes, it was reversed, and the suf-

[1] A tradition mentioned by the BARON D'ANGLURE (*le Sainct Voyage de Jherusalem*) supposes that Our Lord resumed the burden of His Cross at the foot of Calvary, and bore it to the summit. In 1395 a stone was placed to mark the spot where Simon was relieved of his load.

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 35; MARK xv. 20; LUKE xxiii. 33; JOHN xix. 18.

[3] CICERO, *Pro Rabirio*, v. "Nomen ipsum crucis absit. Mentio ipsa indigna cive romano atque homine libero est."

[4] APUL., *Aur. Asin.*, x. "Extrema pœna."

[5] Whence the name *clavifixio*, given to the crucifixion.

[6] It was nearly the same thing when the criminal was fastened to a tree, the branches of which served for the torture of the hands, while the feet were attached to the trunk.

ferer expired, head downwards, suffocated by slow congestion. Sometimes, also, the arms of the cross were crossed obliquely, and the criminal's joints were dislocated by a kind of dismemberment which increased the torture, if, indeed, that were possible.

The anguish can easily be imagined, and Cicero was indeed right in calling this the cruellest and most fearful of all punishments,[1] and that, too, in a time, and amongst people, skilled in the art of torturing.[2]

There were several methods of crucifixion, as we learn from the ancient Greek and Roman writers, so far, at least, as we can understand from their descriptions, quite intelligible to those who had been eye-witnesses of the punishment, but often extremely obscure to us, amongst whom such scenes are no longer enacted.

In general, the cross was not high.[3] The feet of the crucified almost touched the ground, and wild beasts could tear out his entrails, which, in fact, was often the end of his sufferings, especially when he was only fastened to the cross by cords tightly drawn, as was done in Egypt, for instance. The gibbet was of larger dimensions when destined for criminals of mark;[4] hence, it has been concluded that Our Divine Saviour's Cross was particularly high.[5] If we are to believe certain interpretations (rather than certain texts), the sufferer was first fastened to the transverse beam, and then raised by

[1] CICERO, *In Verrem*, v. 66. "Crudelissimum teterrimumque supplicium."

[2] Compare *Acta Martyrum*, etc.

[3] Compare SUETONIUS, *Nero*, 49; ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Mémoire;* MARTIGNY, *Dictionary*, see *Cross;* RENAN, *Vie de Jésus*, etc.

[4] ENNIUS, *loc. cit.*

[5] Saint Helena's hesitation about the three crosses found on Calvary, seems to prove the contrary. If Our Lord's Cross had been higher than the others, the Empress need not have hesitated (MARTIN, *La Passion*, p. 290).

means of cords to the place he was to occupy. Then, the feet were fastened to the stake only, and not to the stool which Gregory of Tours imagined, contrary, it seems, to the evidence of ancient documents.[1]

According to others, a horn,[2] a kind of stool projecting from the centre of the stake, served as seat for the victim, whilst he was nailed to the cross, whence certain expressions frequently met with in ancient writers,[3] but difficult to understand as applied to the Death of Our Divine Lord. In fact, none of the monuments of Christian art allow us to believe in this horn which it has pleased the realists of the modern school to recall, by way of historical exactitude.[4]

Others, again, have supposed that the criminal was raised, and then bound with cords to the gibbet, previously fixed in the ground, before he was nailed to the post, so to say. However authentic this opinion held by Lipsius,[5] and by Benedict XIV.,[6] may appear at first, it has not sufficient force, being merely based

[1] It must, however, be admitted that the famous *graffito* of the Palatine, and certain passages of the Fathers, Saint Irenæus, for instance, may authorize this opinion. Sepp gives very good reasons for rejecting the hypothesis that a stool was placed under the Sacred Feet of Our Divine Lord (*Vie de Jésus*, iii. p. 65).

[2] "Cornu" or "sedile." "Πῆγμα" of the Greeks. See SAINT JUSTIN (*Dialog. cum Tryphone*, 91); TERTULLIAN (*Adv. Nation*, xii.); SAINT IRENÆUS (*Adv. Hæres*, i. 12). Compare MARTIGNY, *Dictionary*, see *Cross*.

[3] "Insalire, ascendere, inequitare, subire in crucem." See LIPSIUS, *De Cruce*.

[4] FOUARD, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.*, ii. 374. This remark is justified by the study of all the monuments of Christian antiquity. SEPP (iii. p. 23) supposes that the *sedile* was only on the stationary crosses, those erected by the waysides *in terrorem*. On these, the criminal only expired after several days' suffering, and this piece of wood was necessary to support the body; but it would be useless in the Jewish mode of crucifixion.

[5] *De Cruce*, ii. 17.

[6] *De Festis*, vii. 86. Here it is question of personal opinion, and not of Papal teaching; besides, there is nothing definite about this opinion, as it results from the text itself.

on a controvertible interpretation of the expressions used by the ancients.

The Epistle of Saint Barnabas supposes absolutely the contrary, and not without reason.[1] The difficulties or inconveniences of every kind which would result from this mode of crucifixion scarcely permit us to believe it was practised. The executioners cared little for their victim's inconvenience, but at the same time they did not want to increase their own labor. And thus we are brought back to the constant tradition of the Church, justified by authentic and conclusive documents,[2] — that is to say, to the crucifixion, such as we see it usually represented, and such as it is natural to imagine.[3]

The Sufferer was laid on the Cross, with extended arms, secured by bonds which paralyzed any attempt at resistance, and fastened with large-headed nails to prevent the slipping which the weight of the body might have caused when the cross was uplifted. All these details are given to us by the writers of the Imperial period, too fruitful in examples of this kind: Lucius, Apuleius, Plautus, Ausonius, to mention only profane writers, are full of information on this point. The Apologists and the Church Historians — Saint Justin, Tertullian, Eusebius, Saint Hilary — are equally precise.

We can, therefore, reconstruct the scene exactly as if we had been present. The Victim was completely stripped of His clothes. However painful this statement may be to Christians desirous of safeguarding

[1] EPISTLE, 12. "Οταν ξύλον κλιθῆ καί ἀναστῆ.

[2] ACT. SS. ad 1 Feb. (*Martyrdom of Saint Pionius of Smyrna*). "Eum igitur ligno fixum erexerunt." RUINART, *Act. des Martyrs*, i. p. 346; EUSEBIUS, *Hist. Eccl.*, iv. 15.

[3] ADRICHOMIUS, *Theatr. Terræ Sanctæ*, § 118; STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 115; SEPP, LE CAMUS, MARIE D'AGRÉDA, EMMERICH, etc.

the respect due to the Most Holy Humanity of Our Saviour, we must, indeed, accept it as justified by the most authentic testimony.[1] Saint Bridget has not feared to repeat it with striking naïveté,[2] and if we are permitted to believe in the charity by which the Son of God was consoled at that moment,[3] it is none the less certain that He had, at first, to suffer this humiliation, in expiation, as the Mystics tell us, of our carnal vanity.[4]

Each hand was pierced with a nail, and each foot also, notwithstanding that some of the writers and artists of modern times think otherwise. Nothing can be more cruel than the mockery of Plautus, as he enumerates the open wounds in the members of those crucified, "Two in the hands, two in the feet — *ut affigantur bis pedes, bis brachia.*"[5] Besides, we can easily understand that one foot could not be placed over the other without extreme difficulty, and it would require a nail of extraordinary length, such as would have infallibly broken the bones.[6] The commentators on the prophecies would, in that case, have been unable to reconcile the words of the Psalmist, "They have dug my hands and feet,"[7] with those of Moses, "Neither shall you break a bone thereof."[8] Now,

[1] ARTEMIDORUS, *Oneirocrit.*, ii. 58. Γυμνοὶ γὰρ σταυροῦνται, ARRIAN, *Epictetus*, iv. 26. "Ut in balneo, vestibus exutus . . . ut solent crucifixi."

[2] *Révélat.* lib. i. c. x. 9. "Stante, sicut natus erat, nudo corpore." The rest of the narrative is heart-breaking in its simplicity.

[3] The apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*. SAINT BRIDGET; CATHERINE EMMERICH, *Douloureuse Passion*.

[4] LUDOLPH, *In Passione Domini*, lxiii. etc.

[5] *Mostellaria*, ii. 1, 13. Saint Cyprian says, "Clavis pedes terebrantibus."

[6] CURTIUS, *De clavis dominicis*, p. 34; FOUARD, *Vie de N. S. Jésus-Christ*, ii. p. 375, note 2; ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Les Instruments de la Passion*, p. 62 and following.

[7] PSALM xxi. 17.

[8] EXOD. xii. 46; NUM. ix. 12; and JOHN xix. 36.

Saint Justin and Tertullian insist on this, with all the authority due to them as eye-witnesses; for these painful sights were not rare in their time. The nails for the hands were driven through the wrist or the palm; those of the feet went through the centre, and came out through the soles, placed against the wood, the legs being slightly raised.[1]

The result, when the Cross was uplifted, was an intolerable position for the sufferer, on account of the drooping forward of the trunk, or the sinking of the body on the bent knees. Contractions and exertions must have inevitably resulted, capable of tearing the hands, but, according to Lucian[2] and Saint Hilary,[3] this was prevented by securing the chest or the waist with cords, especially to lessen the shock at the moment when the cross was implanted in the ground.

The flow of blood from the hands would soon cease from their very position. The feet lost more blood, it is true, although much less than would appear at first. In fact, the circulation was impeded, and, as it were, turned upside down. "With those who were crucified, the blood flowed so copiously through the arteries to the parts of the body which were most compressed or strained, that the veins were not sufficient to bring it back. The aorta, owing to the obstacles met with at the extremities of the legs and arms, caused the blood to rush to the stomach, and above all to the head, causing, by the violent pressure on the carotids, a great redness in the face, and intolerable pain in all parts of the body. But the most fearful thing of all was that the aorta, in

[1] To completely extend the legs would be impossible when the metatarsus and sole were pierced. The second nail would have to go through the instep, and not through the foot itself.

[2] *Pharsalus*, vi. 547.

[3] *De Trinitate*, x.

this state, not being able to drive the blood quickly enough to the extremities, ceased to receive the blood sent through the left ventricle of the heart. The latter organ, in its turn, did not receive freely the blood which came from the lungs, and the right ventricle not being able to discharge into the lungs, which were already full, the blood which it was working out thus completed the disorder, and caused suffering worse than death.[1]

"What rendered the punishment of crucifixion particularly atrocious, was that the sufferer might live for three or four days in this awful state.

"Those of strong constitution lived until starvation put an end to their torture. The primary intention in the infliction of this cruel punishment was not to kill the criminal at once by mortal injury, but to expose the slave, nailed by the hands of which he knew not how to make good use, and to leave him to rot on the wood."[2]

A perfectly just remark in the case where the victim was not previously exhausted by the tortures already inflicted on him,[3] but which could not apply to the case of a man who had been scourged, to speak only of this usual preliminary to crucifixion amongst the Romans.

The power of resistance in the victim could not be great, after these sports in which the human tiger, called a judge, had torn his victim's flesh to ribbons.

But the Jews took the precaution of giving those crucified, wine medicated with frankincense to drink,

[1] Le Camus, *Vie de Notre Seigneur*, iii. p. 346, note 2; Fouard, ii. p. 386; Stapfer, *La Palestine*, p. 114, etc.

[2] Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, p. 425.

[3] Saint Andrew lived for two days on his cross. "Biduo vivens pendebat in cruce," but his history does not mention any preliminary tortures. The martyrs Maura and Timothy remained nine days on their gibbet.

an opiate or stupefying potion which lessened, if it did not remove, the pain. The Scribes had made the giving of this drink obligatory, as appears from the words of the *Talmud*, "To him who must die, thou wilt give to drink a cup of wine with one grain of frankincense, that he may lose consciousness of himself." [1] This wine was to be of good quality, and of sufficient strength [2] to produce a kind of intoxication, according to the words of the Book of Proverbs which counselled giving wine to them that were grieved in mind, that they might forget their sorrow.[3]

Sometimes they substituted, for the frankincense, poppies, myrrh, or some other stupefying substance; hence the name of *sopor* given to this drink by the Romans, amongst whom the use of it soon became habitual.[4]

Some of the criminals refused to drink it, from bravado, to exhibit their contempt for death to the judges and the crowd. The thieves who were crucified with Our Lord seem to have so acted, judging from the invectives in which they indulged from the first. But such fanaticism must have been rare, particularly in those who had already endured torture and scourging. We learn from the Acts of the Martyrs that they sometimes accepted [5] from their

[1] *Sanhedrim*, vi. 1.

[2] "Vinum bonum et generosum," *Midrasch Tanchuma*, 39, 3. "Vino vivo, id est forti." *Bamid bar-Rabba*, 10.

[3] PROVERBS xxxi. 6. "Give . . . wine to them that are grieved in mind, . . . let them drink . . . and remember their sorrow no more." The Rabbis translate, "Date potum inebriantem pereunti," etc.

[4] This was the advice of the physician Dioscorides. APUL., *Asin. Aur.* The Evangelists indicate the bitter substance mixed with the wine by various expressions, easily reconciled with that which Saint Mark uses, *Wine mingled with myrrh* (xv. 23).

[5] P. Allard (*Hist. des persécutions*, ii. part, p. 132), justly opposes the wrong interpretation of Tertullian (*de Jejuniis*, 12) on the subject of this custom. *Acta SS. Fructuosi*, etc., ap. RUINART.

brethren this alleviation of their agony, which will not surprise those who understand human nature, and know that it exists even in the martyr. With still stronger reason, might the common criminal desire his torture to be lessened, and seek in this sad intoxication to anticipate his last sleep.

Meanwhile, there was a mental torture which outlived physical pain, defying that insensibility as long as the mind retained its consciousness, namely, the shame of that punishment. Reserved as it was for slaves[1] and thieves of the worst type, it branded the brow of those crucified with an especial stigma of disgrace. Nothing was left to them of their dignity as men, and all might do what they pleased to them in their agony, except pity them, which seemed unbecoming and almost culpable. Were they not the accursed of God,[2] according to the words of the Scripture. Notwithstanding the horror inspired by the cross, the ancient Pagan writers could not refrain from cursing and mocking those crucified; even those who took away their remains seemed to share in their degradation.[3] According to ancient ideas, it was scarcely possible to be a man, and still believe in the humanity of those who suffered crucifixion.

Thus the Jews knew well what they were doing when they referred the cause of Jesus to Pilate. Their pride was wroth at being compelled to do so by the exigencies of the Roman occupation, but their hatred found ample compensation therein. If they had been free to punish Him as a blasphemer, they would have stoned Him, according to the Law of Israel, but, by delivering Him to the Procurator as a

[1] TACIT., *Histor.* iv. 11. "Servile supplicium," etc.

[2] DEUTER. xxi. 23.

[3] PETRON., *Satir.* cxii. 5. "Cruciarii parentes detraxerunt pendentem. Compare RICH: *Dictionnaire*, see *Cruciarius*.

disturber, they consigned Him to certain death by the cross, that is to say, to degradation which they could not inflict. And now at last, they are about to satiate their vengeance to the full. But a moment more, and they will behold the Son of David exhausting Himself in a vain effort to find relief for His pain and anguish.

They had often witnessed a crucifixion, and yet they shuddered at the thought. And truly, they had reason to shudder. "The wretched sufferer remained there, in the midst of the crowd, uttering the cries wrung from him by his torture. Amongst the lookers-on, some were indifferent. Had they not seen brigands on the cross a hundred times? Others were hostile. The passers-by insulted him; the children threw stones at him. Hour after hour passed away. Night fell, and then the crucified was left alone with his awful physical sufferings; dizzy from the *posca*,[1] but, especially, from the increasing congestion of the brain; feeling Death approaching by degrees, but all too slowly for his wishes. Often when the morrow's sun rose on the horizon, and life once more began to stir on the outskirts of the city and around him, he was still living, suffering ever more and more, and imploring the first passer-by to put an end to his torture. But no one deigned even to answer him. Such was this punishment which certainly has never yet been approached in the awful annals of man's cruelty. History has no record of anything more atrocious. The human beast could not devise a worse one."[2] The "human beast," that monster to which the Greek imagination gave the feet of a goat and the teeth of a viper was about to

[1] The drink of the Roman soldiers, taken here for the medicated wine of the Sanhedrim.

[2] STAPFER, *La Palestine*, p. 115.

give full scope to his instincts, by trampling under foot and devouring, no longer any common prey, but the most beautiful of the children of men.[1] The Word made Flesh [2] for the Salvation of the World, and Who is, for the moment, delivered to his fury. Nothing like it had ever yet been seen, nor would ever be seen again. The sun had gone out, but yet without enkindling the night-stars, eclipsed as they were in that smoke-colored mist which is sometimes still seen in the East, but not so intense, and above all, not so gloomy.[3] Strange obscurity which veils objects, but does not impede the vision, and which lends to every moving thing, a phantom appearance. Since it was the hour of Death, all must wear his livery. The atmosphere was full of the dust of the grave, giving to men's voices a brutish hoarseness, and a wild look to their eyes.

On the slope of Calvary, a little below the narrow plateau by which it was crowned,[4] the executioners were stripping the clothes from the Divine Victim, and quite near, standing in the midst of the Holy Women, Mary, in silent anguish, was watching the last movements of Her Son.

What is the use of trying to depict that scene? No words could do so, unless those of God Himself. The Gospel, because it must use the language of human speech, has preferred to keep silence.

The pilgrim visiting the places where Our Blessed

[1] PSALM xliv. 3. "Thou art beautiful above the sons of men."

[2] JOHN i. 14.

[3] MATTHEW xxvii. 45; LUKE xxiii. 44–45.

[4] The spot where Our Lord was stripped of His clothes is a little below the summit of Calvary. At the present time it is covered by a mosaic pavement laid on the earth-work which had to be made to bring the ground on a level with the rock in which the cross was planted. The summit of Calvary was not cut down by Saint Helena, as has been thought. (See GUÉRIN, *La Terre Sainte*.) This very recent mutilation is the work of the Greeks.

Lord deigned to suffer such humiliation, has no thought except to kneel, and prostrate himself, and cover with his tears and kisses the ground consecrated by such unheard-of abasement, and knowing that he is the cause of the Sacrifice, as he is the object of the Love, he does not dare to raise his head, lest he should meet the Master's glance. Yet mingled with reproach for his weakness, he will find in it the promise of his pardon.

CHAPTER IV

THE CRUCIFIXION

"And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified him there; and the robbers, one on the right hand, and the other on the left." — LUKE xxiii. 33.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother." — JOHN xix. 25.

THE cross prepared for Our Divine Lord was made of two square beams of a resinous wood since recognized as identical with Aleppo pine, abounding in Palestine, where it is still easily found.[1] It did not differ from those of the other criminals, except, perhaps, that it was a little higher, according to a tradition quite worthy of acceptance.[2] The Jews, indeed, would never dream of sparing their Victim the humiliation of a common punishment, but the Romans might easily conceive the idea of mocking the King Whom His own subjects had delivered to Cæsar, by crucifying Him on a more elevated gibbet. Pilate, it is true, had ordered nothing of the kind; neither did he order the Crowning with Thorns, and yet it had taken place without any protest on his

[1] ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Mémoire*, ii. p. 63. We do not always agree with the learned author's conclusions, but none the less we regard his work as of the greatest value, and have availed ourselves of it largely.

[2] Ennius (*apud* SEPP, *loc. cit.*) seems to credit this tradition, and it is also supported by several passages in the Old Testament relating to the punishment of notable offenders. We have said before that the history of the finding of the Holy Cross appears to contradict this tradition.

part. The legion under his command was composed, in great part, of volunteers,[1] and it was his policy to allow them more licence than soldiers trained to the traditional discipline. Hence those aggravated tortures and insults — *addita pereunti ludibria*, as Tacitus would have said. Having given no orders, no doubt Pilate thought he was safe from all reproach. However, such were the ethics of his time, of which it has not retained the monopoly. But the Cross of Our Divine Lord could not have been more than eight or nine feet high, even admitting that it was sunk a foot deep in the ground in order to keep it upright. It was the exaggeration of its dimensions that led to the stools and ladders imagined by the artists and the visionaries of the Middle Ages.[2] The primitive tradition was more correct, as the remainder of this narrative will prove.[3]

After having moistened His lips with the wine mingled with myrrh, Our Divine Lord turned away His Head.[4] Did He simply mean to refuse the relief offered to Him, or was it rather a protest against the vinegar which they added to the customary potion,

[1] GRUTER, *Inscript.*, i. 434. "Cohors militum voluntaria quæ est in Syria." Smith (*Dictionary, Army*) maintains that this cohort was the Procurator's bodyguard. In that case, we must suppose that it came from Cæsarea with Pilate, on the occasion of the Passover, and we should distinguish it from the cohort which formed the usual garrison of the Antonia. This is by no means improbable.

[2] See LUDOLPH, SAINT BRIDGET, etc. In the paintings which belong to the thirteenth, and especially to the fifteenth century, the Cross is of enormous height. After that time, artists adhered to probability.

[3] The monuments of Gothic and Byzantine art are executed in accordance with primitive tradition.

[4] MATTHEW xxvii. 34. "And when he had tasted (wine mingled with gall), he would not drink." We have said before what we must think of the expression used by Saint Matthew. This *gall* is probably the bitter substance which Saint Mark designates by the word *myrrh*.

as Saint Matthew insinuates? The executioners took no heed of His refusal, and soon, according to custom, He was stripped of His garments. It was indeed a mournful sight: that Sacred Flesh furrowed by the lash, mangled by falls, bleeding afresh from that brutal unrobing, and quivering at the humiliation which It was suffering before all the people.[1]

There is a pious belief that one of the bystanders covered the nakedness of the Victim with a girdle.[2] According to Saint Bonaventure and Ludolph the Carthusian, Mary Herself removed her veil, and bound it round her Divine Son's Sacred loins.[3] Alas! it is by no means likely that the poor Mother was able to render this last service to Her Child. Love would inspire her with the thought, but the rage of the Jews and the brutality of the executioners would prevent her putting it into execution.

Let us be satisfied with receiving the wan smile from the Lips of the dying Redeemer, wherewith He rewarded that act of supreme compassion, according to Saint Bridget.[4] Henceforth, nothing awaited Him but suffering and agony, as at Gethsemane — but more terrible still, if possible. Before lying down upon the Cross[5] had not the Divine Sufferer need to

[1] Artemidorus, Arrian, etc., *loc. cit. supra.* Saint Bridget makes the following remark: "Ipse veniens ibi (to Golgotha) *exuit se personaliter* vestibus suis."

[2] Saint Bridget, *Révélation*, lib. iv. c. lxx; Catherine Emmerich, *Douloureuse Passion*, c. xxx.

[3] Ludolph, *Vita Christi;* Saint Bonaventure, *Méditation.* At Aix-la-Chapelle, a three-cornered piece of coarse linen stained with blood, is preserved, which is said to be the *perizonium* or girdle worn by Christ on the Cross.

[4] Lib. i., *Révélation*, x. 9. "Stante autem filio meo (she makes Mary say), sicut natus erat nudo corpore, unus tunc accurrens apportavit sibi velamen quo ipse *exultans* velabat," etc. Elsewhere, lib. iv. c. lxx. 9. "Quasi consolatus," etc.

[5] Ludolph, *De Passione*, lxiii. 5. "Super lignum crucis, *quæ in terra erat posita*, dire projectus." Id. ibid. 7. "Cruce in terra jacente, postea Christum affixum levaverunt cum cruce." (He quotes Innocent III. on this point, etc.)

repeat, "My Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt"? He alone could tell us, but it seems most natural that in this hour He should have desired to renew His consent to the work of our Redemption. He bent His Knees, and dragging Himself to the instrument of punishment, stretched Himself upon it without a word. His right Hand was laid on the end of the cross-beam and one of the executioners fastened it with one sharp blow by a four-sided nail about three inches long, the sight of which makes one shudder.[1]

The Blood gushed forth; the Fingers contracted; and a moan escaped the Sufferer's Sacred Lips. A second blow, and the left Hand was fastened to the the wood. Those *chaouchs* of the Procurator were skilled workmen who took a pleasure in their office, as their dexterity proved. There is nothing more frightful than this thirst in man for the blood of man, this delight in the torture inflicted on his fellow-creature; this refined science of torturing, which a wild beast would envy. But how much more so when they are applied to destroy what God has created of most innocent and most perfect? How can we reflect without terror that it was our malice which gave those foolish arms their skill, and that we shall one day answer for it before the Tribunal of the Crucified?

The Divine Hands being nailed, it was now the turn of the Feet. A fearful shudder shook the

[1] One of these nails is preserved in Rome, in the Church of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, where pilgrims are admitted to venerate it. Fac-similes of it are scattered over the whole world. It is about four inches long, and about half an inch wide at the base, on each side. The head is enclosed in a sort of hood, which leaves about three inches of the body visible. A nail is shown at Trèves which, it is said, pierced Our Lord's right foot, it differs slightly from the one we have just described.

Victim whilst they were stretching the contracted Limbs on the trunk of the accursed tree. What did the executioners care, accustomed as they were to such spasms, and eager to finish their work? Whilst with brutal pressure the Sacred Feet were held down in the required position, the hammers quickly drove in the two nails which remained. Then, satisfied with their work, the executioners stood up laughing, "Now, Galilæan, come off, if Thou art the Son of God!"

The whole Body writhed in an great effort to find a less painful position on that awful bed; the Chest expanded to inhale air, whilst the Head fell forward, twisted in such a manner as to strain the Arms, and impart to them in turn a fearful shock. Then the convulsion passed downwards, depressing the Loins, bending the Knees, and ending in the Feet, whose contracted Toes scratched the wood. The Sacred Heart palpitated violently; hoarse sobs issued from the Divine Mouth; large tears flowed down His Cheeks, whilst His dilated Eyes implored a little pity and consolation. Then came the climax. The Victim appeared to faint and lose consciousness of His misery. His Head drooped; His moans ceased, and His sacred Limbs relaxed as much as was possible. Anxiety was depicted in the executioners' faces. Was He then about to die before they had raised the Cross? The crowd would lose its full measure of exciting sport. To the work quickly, and let the gibbet arise, dominating the crest of the hill! Let the mocking *Ave* of the Prætorium replace the "*Ave, Cæsar imperator,*" with which they hailed the victorious Tiberius.

Then the executioners raised the Cross to an upright position, and sliding it to the hole dug for its reception, they quickly fixed it firmly in the ground,

by carefully piling up the earth[1] around the base. This operation was not effected without difficulty, and required certain precautions, such as the surrounding the Sufferer's Chest and Waist with cords to prevent the tearing away of the Hands at the moment that the Cross was jolted into the hole where it was to remain.

But however careful the executioners may have been, it was impossible to avoid the shock of the foot of the Cross striking against the stone when it was lowered into the hole.[2] No doubt, a cry escaped the Sufferer which Mary's Heart alone heard, and which was lost in the hurricane of insult and blasphemy.

At the sight of the Sacred Victim uplifted between heaven and earth, the Scribes and Pharisees seemed for a moment to curb their hatred, perhaps from a feeling of hypocritical decency; but the people massed upon the slopes and in the low ground raised a tremendous shout,[3] "Vah! thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, Save Thyself, coming down from the cross."[4]

Then the crowd, satisfied, or else weary, began to disperse, but, as they passed by, they wagged their heads and continued to repeat the same insults,[5] in which, before long, the priests joined.

"He saved others," they said, ironically, "himself he cannot save.[6] Let him save himself if he

[1] The site of this hole is still venerated. It may be seen under the altar where the Greeks officiate, to the left of the Place of Compassion.

[2] LUDOLPH, *De Passione*, lxiii. 7–8; LE CAMUS, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.*, iii. p. 336.

[3] LUKE xxiii. 35. "And the people stood beholding."

[4] MARK xv. 29.

[5] MATTHEW xxvii. 39. "And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads."

[6] Id. xxvii. 42.

be Christ the elect of God that we may see and believe." [2]

And as the Crown of Thorns, which had been replaced on the Divine Head,[3] reminded them of His title of Son of David, they repeated, —

"Let Christ the King of Israel come down now from the Cross." [4]

And one blasphemy calling forth another, they continued, —

"He trusted in God, let him deliver *him* now, if he will have Him, for he said: I am the Son of God."[5]

"It is an unheard-of thing," remarks Bossuet, "for cruelty and derision to be joined together in full force, for the horror of bloodshed fills the mind with gloomy images, which check the transports of that malignant joy which constitutes derision, and prevent it from having full sway. But we must not be surprised if the contrary happen on this day, for Hell is vomiting its vemon, and the demons are like the souls who exhibit all the emotions we are beholding. All those rebellious spirits are necessarily cruel and mocking: cruel because they are envious; mocking because they are proud. For, it is evident, without my telling you, that the work, the delight of envy, is cruelty, and that the triumph of pride is mockery. That is the reason why on this day, when the spirits of mockery and of cruelty prevail, there is such a strange commingling of derision and cruelty that we scarce can tell which predominates." [6]

[1] LUKE xxiii. 35. "Let him save himself if he be Christ the elect of God." [2] MARK xv. 32.

[3] ORIGEN, *In Matth., loc. cit.;* TERTULLIAN, *Contra Judæos,* xiii. Saint Bridget says, "Tunc corona spinea capiti ejus arctissime imposita fuit, quæ ad medium frontis descendebat," lib. iv. c. lxx. 6.

[4] MARK xv. 32.

[5] MATTHEW xxvii. 43.

[6] BOSSUET, *Deuxième sermon sur la Passion,* i.

Bossuet is right. This day belongs entirely to Hell, and Our Divine Saviour might, indeed, say of the unhappy Jews, inspired by Satan, "they know not what they do."

The hour had come for the fulfilment of the prophecy long ago recalled by the Master, "Hearing, hear, and understand not; and see the vision, and know it not. Blind the hearts of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them."[1]

Meanwhile, amidst this uproar, the executioners had raised two other crosses, one on the right, the other on the left.[2] They bore two thieves, condemned long ago, and reserved for the solemn atonement of the Pasch. Their crime is not known to us, but it has been justly supposed that they were accomplices of Barabbas, guilty, like him, of sedition, murder, and robbery.[3]

The Gospel which, until this moment, had left them unnoticed, now brings them forward for the fulfilment of another prophetic saying, "He was reputed with the wicked."[4] Was this disgraceful association Pilate's idea, or did it originate with the Jews? If the Procurator had thought to mock the Chief[5] Priests and Pharisees by it, he seems to have failed in his purpose. Everything which rendered their Victim more miserable was acceptable to them; and it was not against this sign of contempt that they protested, — as they did before long, with a reserve calculated to give more force to their complaint.

[1] ISAI. vi. 9; MATTHEW xv. 13.

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 38. "Then were crucified with him two thieves: one on the right hand, and one on the left."

[3] Tradition calls them Dismas and Gestas.

[4] ISAI. liii. 12.

[5] LUDOLPH, *De Passione*, lxiii. 40.

In conformity with the ordinances of Roman Law,[1] the soldiers had placed over Our Lord's Sacred Head, the inscription, bearing His Name, and the cause of His condemnation. It was a little board whitened with lime, about one foot in length,[2] on which was inscribed in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin characters, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."[3] The characters[4] were too small to be easily read at a distance, and in the excitement of the first moment the Chief Priests had not remarked the Procurator's wording.[5] But, on approaching the Cross, they heard the soldiers emphasizing by their sarcasms, this declaration of Christ's Royalty,[6] and perceived the mistake of the official scribe. They at once sent a deputation to Pilate, to say to him, "Write not, the King of the Jews, — but that he said, I am the King of the Jews."

"What I have written, I have written,"[7] was the Roman's curt response. He had had enough of this complicity, which had deprived him of honor and peace of conscience. The Jews understood him, and the matter dropped. The dying Victim, on His Cross, was King, by order of Cæsar's representative, in spite of those who cried out, —

"We will not have this man to reign over us."[8]

Their work being done, the executioners went

[1] APUL., *Florida*, i.; DION CASSIUS, liv. 3; EUSEBIUS, *Hist. Eccl.* vi.; *Actes des martyrs*, passim.

[2] These proportions are deduced from the fragment preserved at Rome. ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *op. cit.*, p. 183, and following. The letters were red.

[3] JOHN xix. 19.

[4] They were about one inch in length.

[5] C. EMMERICH, *Douloureuse Passion*, c. XXX.

[6] LUKE xxiii. 36. "And the soldiers also mocked him, . . . saying: If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself."

[7] JOHN xix. 22.

[8] LUKE xix. 14.

aside,[1] and proceeded to divide the Criminal's garments,[2] the tunic, the drawers, the robe, the girdle, the mantle, sandals, and headgear. The robe, woven in a loom, was of one piece. They put it aside, saying, "Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it."[3]

They divided the other garments into four lots, for which they threw dice,[4] interlarding their disputes with jests about the slender booty which resulted from such a tremendous affair.

The centurion collected his men, and concentrated them at the foot of Calvary, leaving the regulation squad of four foot-soldiers with a decurion[5] near the Cross, to prevent any excesses on the part of the crowd.

The precaution was not a useless one. If the thieves had nothing to fear, it was not so with Our Divine Redeemer, upon Whom insults never ceased to rain.

It would seem as if the hatred of His enemies increased in proportion with His sufferings.

They became intoxicated with blood, and, were it not for the presence of the Roman soldiers, they would probably have thrown stones and aimed blows at that dying Victim Who was not dying quickly enough. Seated some few paces[6] off, the soldiers guarded Him; but they, too, insulted Him, offering Him, in derision, the vinegar and water with which

[1] The place is marked by the Armenian Chapel of the Division of the Garments, at the foot of Calvary, to the northeast.

[2] It was their right. *Digest.*, xlvii. 20; *De Bonis damnat.*, 6.

[3] JOHN xix. 23. "Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout."

[4] JOHN xix. 23. "They took his garments, and they made four parts, to every soldier a part." MATTHEW xxvii. 35. "Casting lots."

[5] This custom is mentioned in the ACTS xiii. 4. SMITH, *Dictionary, Army*. Perhaps each cross had its particular guard, the twelve men being under the control of a decurion.

[6] MATTHEW xxvii. 36. "And they sat, and watched him."

they were refreshing themselves[1] in the overwhelming heat, rendered still more oppressive by the haze. Powerless to repress them, their chief remained absorbed in consideration of the scene, wherein, to him, the hand of God was clearly revealed.

To every blasphemy, an answering protest arose, like an echo, in his soul. This Death was indeed supernatural, and in his eyes the thorns seemed like rays of light around that Head, bowed with the weight of humiliation.

At times, there was a lull; the crowd ceased yelling, and in the comparative silence, the thieves themselves could be heard mocking the Galilæan. Like the majority of the sectaries delivered up to Roman justice, they had, no doubt, refused to drink the opiate, to show their courage and their contempt for the conquerors.[2] Pain had not subdued them; on the contrary, it had excited them to frenzy, which broke forth in maledictions against our Divine Lord.[3]

What harm had He then done to them?

The Gospel allows us to divine their cause of complaint, by repeating the words of one of them.

"If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us."[4]

The thief who used these words, according to Saint Luke, blasphemed the Divine Mission of Jesus; the other, according to Saint Matthew, in bitterness and despair, was satisfied with repeating the maledictions of the Sanhedrists.

But both referred[5] to the hopes so often awakened

[1] LUKE xxiii. 36. "And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar." This drink was called *posca*.

[2] Compare JOSEPH., *Antiq. Jud.*, XVIII. i. 6.

[3] MATTHEW xxvii. 44. "*And the self-same thing*, the thieves, also, that were crucified with him, *reproached him with*."

[4] LUKE xxiii. 39. "And one of those robbers who were hanged, *blasphemed him*, saying: If thou be Christ, save thyself and us."

[5] LUDOLPH, *De Passione*, lxiii. 15.

in souls, especially in Galilee, regarding that Kingdom of the Messiah for which the followers of Judas the Galilæan had tried to prepare the way, which the crowd had tried to set up in the desert, which Jesus Himself had announced to be near at hand, and which had again vanished like smoke in a storm. The light could not penetrate to those dull brains; wrath took the place of the vanished delusion, and insults were heaped on the Prophet, as the author of the dream, of the deception, and of their death.

They must curse somebody, and Our Lord was the fitter object of their maledictions in that they had not in the least listened to His instructions. They were none of His disciples; they had received no promise from Him in return for their fidelity. All they knew about Him was that He had preached a new Kingdom, wherein they believed that they would certainly share in the general good fortune, without having contributed to it by any particular effort on their part. They probably counted on receiving an amnesty in the day of triumph, if not on the glorification of their attempts against the established government.

Had this not often happened? Why should it not be with them, as with so many others? No doubt, whilst they waited, they had often murmured at the Prophet's tardiness and scoffed at His disinterestedness. He had wronged them as He did Judas. The latter betrayed Him; they insulted Him.

Human nature changes but little in the course of ages, and respect for the vanquished is not a virtue easily acquired.

To complete the sadness of this scene, already so sad, not a friendly voice was raised, — not to protest, that would have required too much courage, — but at least, to compassionate the dying Sufferer. His

Blessed Mother and the Holy Women were kept at a distance by the Roman Guard, and John had enough to do to protect them from the pushing of the crowd, and the transports of their own grief. He could scarcely collect his senses in this time of confusion and helplessness.

He knew not whether, by his cowardice in the beginning, he had not rendered himself an accomplice in this crime, or whether his duty to Mary did not now forbid him to confess the Divinity of the Crucified.

The Prophecy was fulfilled to the very letter.

"In thy sight are all they that afflict me; my heart hath expected reproach and misery," said the Psalmist to the Lord. "And I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort me, and I found none. And they gave me gall for my food; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." [1]

But if Our Saviour's Divine Lips repeated the words which He had placed in the mouth of David, they did not utter the ominous words which the Prophet allowed to escape from him.

"Pour out thy indignation upon them; and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be made desolate; and let there be none to dwell in their tabernacles.

"Because they have persecuted him whom thou hast smitten; and they have added to the grief of my wounds.

"Add thou iniquity upon their iniquity; and let them not come into thy justice. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; and with the just let them not be written." [2]

Whilst the crowd was yelling, the Sanhedrists blas-

[1] PSALM lxviii. 21–22. [2] PSALM lxviii. 25–29.

pheming, the soldiers scoffing, and the thieves seeking for some supreme insult to hurl at Him, He raised His Divine Head with painful difficulty, and, fixing His Divine Eyes on Heaven, murmured with ineffable sweetness, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." [1]

[1] St. Luke xxiii. 34.

CHAPTER V

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF JESUS, AND HIS DEATH

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." — LUKE xxiii. 34.
"This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." — LUKE xxiii. 43.
"Woman behold thy son." JOHN xix. 26.
"My God, why hast thou forsaken me." — MATTHEW xxvii. 46.
"I thirst." — JOHN xix. 28.
"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." — LUKE xxiii. 46.
"It is consummated." — JOHN xix. 30.

"FORGIVE them, for they know not what they do!" Scarcely had our Divine Saviour pronounced these words, when they produced an effect in the soul of one of the thieves at His side. The wretched creature's blasphemies all at once died away on his lips, and at the same time his heart softened with respectful compassion for the Great Victim Whose fate he was sharing. Turning towards his accomplice a look at once stern and beseeching, "Neither dost thou fear God," said he to him, "seeing thou art under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done no evil."[1]

Then, addressing our Divine Lord, "Lord," he humbly murmured, "remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom."[2] And thus his conversion was complete. He recognized in Him Whom

[1] LUKE xxiii. 40–41. [2] Id. ibid. 42.

he had insulted but the moment before,[1] the Supreme King, Whose Kingdom is not of this world, the Lord of heaven and earth, and the Master of Death. But how had he recognized Him, unless by those accents of All Powerful Mercy in which He had solicited pardon for His executioners? A God alone could ask with such confidence; a God alone could so mercifully forgive. If the mystery of His mortal Life grew still more impenetrable during His Agony, the thief none the less divined in it all that could assure his faith, his hope, and his repentance. Like the sinner, like the publican, like the Samaritan woman, he rendered homage with a docile heart to Christ, the Son of the living God,[2] Who had revealed Himself to him through His mercy to sinners.[3] Hence, he at once received absolution for his sins, and the assurance of his redemption.

"Amen, I say to thee; this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."[4] Words at once full of consolation and of menace for the soul groaning in the slavery of sin. Full of consolation, for they leave room for hope, even to the last breath; full of menace and of affliction, for they were said to only one of the two thieves.[5]

Meanwhile, the darkness had become so profound that it was with difficulty people recognized one another. The terror caused by this unaccustomed gloom penetrated the souls which pity could not touch. The greater number of the Jews hastened

[1] "Crux illi schola erat," says SAINT AUGUSTINE, "ibi docuit Magister latronem: lignum pendentis cathedra factum est docentis." *Serm. CCXXXIV.* 2.

[2] MATTHEW xvi. 16.

[3] MARK ii. 17. "I came not to call the just but sinners." Compare I TIMOTHY i. 15, etc.

[4] LUKE xxiii. 43.

[5] SAINT AUGUSTINE, *loc. cit.*

to regain the city and the Temple, in order to seek refuge from the catastrophe, which they felt was impending. The soldiers, feeling uneasy, followed this movement of retreat by drawing near the group collected around the centurion on the slope of Calvary.

Access to the Cross was thus rendered easier. But the blasphemers no longer thought of abusing this liberty. They fled, with bowed heads and silent tongues, as eager now to get away from the sight of their Victim as they were, a few moments ago, to let Him be seen by every one. Hence, the friends of Our Divine Lord could advance cautiously to the foot of His Cross. There were Mary His Mother, John the Beloved Disciple, Magdalen and Martha, Mary the mother of James the Less, Salome, Joanna of Chusa, and others whose names tradition has not handed down to us.[1]

The dying Saviour's looks fell upon this little group[2] of faithful friends, no doubt seeking Her Whom He expected at this rendezvous of the Last Hour. Mary was standing on His left, near the unrepentant thief,[3] as if she were trying to save him from the justice about to strike him. A vain effort, alas! for the unhappy wretch would not avail himself of Her Intercession. There arose from the Heart of the Divine Mother an ardent supplication to the Sacred Heart of Her Son for the whole human race of whom

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 55. "And there were there many women. . . . Among whom was Mary Magdalen," etc. Martha is not named in the Gospel, but all tradition places her with her sister near the Cross.

[2] JOHN xix. 25. "Now, there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister," etc.

[3] That is the place, which an examination of the spot, and the site of the Altar of the Stabat Mater on Calvary, proves she occupied. There is not the least doubt of this, if we accept the tradition which shows us Our Lord dying with His Face turned to the west.

He had made Her Co-redemptrix. What she desired, above all, was the assurance of pardon for mankind. He understood this well, and He immediately addressed Her in those words, full of the respect due to the Office with which He invested Her.

"Woman, behold thy Son!" and with a glance, He designated Saint John. Then, addressing the Disciple, He said, in grave sweet tones, "Son, behold thy Mother!"[1] That is to say, "O my Mother, Queen and Mistress of all that is Mine,[2] behold mankind, whom I confide to you that you may be henceforth their Advocate. I constitute you their Mother, that you may forbid Me to reject them, for I could not do it without rejecting You Yourself. Be happy; they are saved. And you, O man, behold your Model and your Refuge. I have pardoned you, for I commit you to Her to whom I can refuse nothing, when she intercedes in your favor."[3]

A long silence ensued, during which Our Divine Lord entered into His last Agony, shorter, but also more cruel, than that of Gethsemane. He would not abandon Himself to it until He had reassured sinners against the fear of the abandonment wherein God was about to leave the Victim of their sins. For this reason He had given them first a refuge in Mary's maternal love. Now He could give Himself up to the pressure of Divine Justice, to suffer all that is inferred by the malediction pronounced against sin. "And he put on cursing like a garment,"[4] by taking the responsibility of our miseries. Consequently, He

[1] JOHN xix. 26–27.

[2] It is important to note that in the East *Woman* is used in the sense of *Madame*. It is, therefore, a respectful mode of address, no matter what may be the opinion of certain commentators.

[3] Compare THEOPHYLACTUS; NOEL ALEXANDRE; TOLET, etc., *in hunc loc.*; BOSSUET, *Panégyrique de S. Jean.*

[4] PSALM cviii. 18.

must suffer the punishment, that is to say, the abandonment in which God justly leaves those who first abandon Him.

Now, by man's sin, this abandonment must be without remission. The separation, of itself eternal, admitted of no return. This is why Our Lord found Himself, in that hour, abandoned by God, with a sense of solitude similar to that which makes the damned despair. "And it went (malediction) in like water into His entrails; and like oil in His bones."[1] That was the hour of Hell's triumph; and, lost for the moment in that abyss of anguish, the Redeemer could not refrain from crying out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"[2]

Ten centuries before, David had made the Messiah[3] utter this complaint, and the Jews who had remained on Calvary should have recognized it, they who boasted of their knowledge of the Sacred Books.

However, they did nothing of the kind, and as He made use of the Syriac-Chaldaic dialect, "Eli, Eli, lamma Sabacthani"[4] they concluded that He was calling Elias the Prophet, often invoked in times of danger, and they said to one another, laughing, "This man calleth Elias."[5] Then He added, almost without a pause, "I thirst."[6]

One of the soldiers rose, and placing a sponge soaked with vinegar and water on the end of a reed, he put it to the Dying Redeemer's Lips, whilst the others cried out, —

[1] PSALM cviii. 18.
[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 46.
[3] PSALM xxi. 1.
[4] Weill thinks that this should be read, "Eli, Eli, lamah esabthani?" according to the pure Hebrew, and not the Armenian dialect (*Moïse et le Talmud*, p. 175).
[5] MATTHEW xxvii. 47.
[6] JOHN xix. 28.

"Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver him." [1]

The soldier, notwithstanding, performed this charitable act, and a little coolness tempered the fever which consumed the Crucified Lord. Experience has proved that thirst was one of the greatest sufferings of those condemned to death by crucifixion, being sufficient in itself to cause death. "Everything contributed to produce it: the physical sufferings, the distension of the intestines, the progressive loss of blood, and, in the case of Our Divine Lord, all the preceding trials and tortures." [2] The Master would not be exempt from this suffering,[3] and for ages His inspired Prophets had shown Him receiving vinegar in His thirst from the hands of His enemies.[4] Yet this thirst was caused not so much by His sufferings, as by His ardent desire for the salvation of souls. In proportion as the work of Redemption advanced, and the desired goal drew near, a sort of impatience seized the Divine Sufferer. In the very depths of His abandonment, when He complained at finding Himself forsaken by God, it is hard to say whether He did not suffer as much from the tardiness of souls in approaching Him. In reality, was it not for them that He accepted this withdrawal of the vision of His Heavenly Father? And the joy of beholding Him again, would it not be heralded by the words which should assure Him of the realization of His desire?

He did not lose confidence in God, violent as was the tempest by which He seemed to be overwhelmed. Above the floods, and through the rents in the

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 47–49.

[2] LE CAMUS, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.*, iii. p. 348.

[3] JOHN xix. 28. "That the Scripture might be fulfilled. . . . I thirst."

[4] PSALM lxviii. 22. "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

troubled sky, He retained the vision of the ray which descended to Him. But He none the less experienced how wide is the gulf created by sin between God and man, and what a prodigy Divine Mercy had to perform for its removal. Confiding, yet trembling, He could not restrain Himself from stretching forth His Divine Hands, and sending forth cries to God and to souls, to unite them, and clasp them in the same embrace, "I thirst." Thirst for God Who is hiding Himself; thirst for souls who are escaping from Him.[1] Thirst for the consummation of the sacrifice which shall satisfy God, and redeem mankind; thirst for the union, henceforth indissoluble, wherein God and man shall enjoy together the joy and glory of eternity.

Oh! this thirst of which He complains, shows us indeed that He is a man like ourselves: a man of sorrow and of weakness. But it also indeed shows us that He is Man-God, alone capable of understanding the value of souls, of loving them with such a love, of so passionately desiring them, because He has made them and predestined them for His Kingdom.

It was about three o'clock. Suddenly a cry of victory broke from Him.

"It is consummated." [2] He ascends from the depths of the abyss. He sees the sun shining resplendently on His Head. God is appeased. Man is forgiven. Consequently His Mission is ended. With one glance, He reviews the whole series of prophecies, and finds that they are all fulfilled. Neither heaven

[1] LUDOLPH, *Vita Christi*, part 2, c. lxiii. 43, cit. S. Bernard. "Quid ergo sitis, o bone Jesu? Certe solam redemptionem hominis et gaudium humanæ salutis." S. Augustine adds, "Quid sitis, Domine Jesu? Vinum de vite aut aquam de flumine? Sitis tua salus mea."

[2] JOHN xix. 30.

nor earth has anything more to ask of Him. He has won the right to rest, as after a new creation of mankind, and even of the world, for He has re-established all things in Himself,[1] as man had depraved them with himself. He regains strength — like the workman who feels his chest expand, fresh vigor run through his limbs, all his life renewed, with satisfaction at seeing his work brought to a successful conclusion. It would seem as if He were again transfigured. He lifts up His Divine Head, and with ringing Voice,[2] announces to the world, His departure from life, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."[3]

Never had such words been uttered amongst men. They are the most magnificent testimony which can be rendered to itself by the power which is in the Word of God.

They are a repetition — but a justifiable repetition — of that challenge uttered to the world, "I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me; but I lay it down of myself; and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment I have received from my Father."[4] Formerly, when the Jews heard these words, never heard before, many of them said, "He hath a devil, and is mad. Why hear you Him?"[5] Now He utters them for the confusion of the devil, and the justification of His Wisdom. Let us hearken to them attentively.

"My Father, sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to me. . . . Then

[1] EPHES. i. 10. "To re-establish all things in Christ, that are in heaven and on earth in him."
[2] LUKE xxiii. 46. "Crying with a loud voice."
[3] Id. ibid. 46.
[4] JOHN x. 17.
[5] Id. x. 20.

said I, behold I come."[1] It is I who shall be Your Victim and the Cross shall be the Altar of My Holo caust. No one can force You to prepare this sacrifice. No one can force Me to its consummation. But We have but one will, and You know that I do always the things that please You.[2] Behold your desire fulfilled and receive My soul, You from Whom I have received that soul. It is not becoming that any one else should take it, and to You alone do I remit it, as freely as I accepted it from You.

His Voice vibrated,[3] dominating the sacred trumpets, which were announcing the Sacrifice offered at the ninth hour. The Paschal Lamb was about to be immolated in the Temple, and the people were preparing to begin the Feast of the Deliverance. The Levitical trumpets ceased to sound. The Priest struck the Victim, and the crowd prostrated to adore their Liberator. At the same moment, Jesus bowed His Divine Head, and breathed forth His Last Sigh.[4] It was not Death, remarks Saint John Chrysostom, which bowed that Head, but the Dying Saviour's Own Will, to prove that He was, indeed, the Lord of all things.[5] He entered into His rest, not worn out with fatigue, but ending His labor at the time which seemed suitable to Him, without hurrying, as becomes a Chief who thinks fit to cease commanding.

Scarcely had He closed His eyes, when the earth trembled,[6] shaken to its foundations. A large fissure opened between the Cross of Our Divine Lord and

[1] HEBR. x. 5; PSALM xxxix. 7. "Sacrifice and oblation thou didst not desire . . . then said I: Behold I come."

[2] JOHN viii. 29.

[3] MARK xv. 37. "And Jesus having cried out with a loud voice. . . ."

[4] JOHN xix. 30. "And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost."

[5] *Homil.* 84, *in cap. XIX. Joannis.*

[6] MATTHEW xxvii. 51. "The earth quaked, and the rocks were rent."

that of the thief, splitting transversely the veins with which the rock is seamed. "This monument which brings into such strong light the Divinity of Jesus Christ"[1] may still be seen at the present day.

In the valleys and on the adjacent hills, the dead were seen, about to come forth from the caverns where the Saints had been entombed.[2]

Terror-stricken, the Jews who had remained on Calvary fled, striking their breasts.[3] The crime had not frightened them, but the sight of Nature appalled at the wickedness of men[4] filled them with a repentance which we would fain believe merited for them pardon. But they were indeed wrong to fly to the city where the Divine Anger was still more signally manifested. The foundations of Moriah were shaken. The Gate of Nicanor, the brass portals of which could scarcely be moved by twenty men, had opened of itself.[5] The enormous marble lintel which capped the entrance to the Sanctuary had split[6] and the veil of violet, purple, and scarlet, which hid the Holy of Holies, was rent in twain.[7] At the same time, mysterious voices were heard, "Let us go hence," with sounds of hurrying footsteps retiring from the Court, from which all mystery had henceforth departed.[8]

[1] ADDISSON, *De la religion chrétienne*, ii. 120. Compare SAINT CYRIL, *Cateches.*, xiii. 4. This fissure extends far into the centre of the rock (SAULCY, *Dict. des antiq. bibl.*, col. 772).

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 52. "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had slept, arose."

[3] LUKE xxiii. 48. "Returned, striking their breasts."

[4] SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Serm.* 41, *de Passione Domini.* "Expavit scelus hominum natura rerum."

[5] TALMUD, *Gemara*, ap. SEPP, iii. 5, 1.

[6] *Évangile des Hébreux;* quoted by Saint Jerome (*In Matth.*, xxvii. 51).

[7] MARK xv. 38. "And the veil of the temple was rent in two, from the top to the bottom."

[8] SEPP, iii. 53, quotes the TALMUD, tract *Taanith.*

If we are to believe the *Talmud*, the wise men then understood that the destruction of the Temple was at hand. "O Temple! O Temple!" cried out Johanan-ben-Zachaï, "why art thou thus shaken? Alas! thy destined fate is but too well known to us. Zachary, the son of Joiada, has predicted it in these terms, 'Lebanon, open thy gates and let the fire consume thy cedars.'" And the people, touched by these lamentations, covered their heads with ashes, and tore their hair, crying, "Woe to us."

Catherine Emmerich has left us a description of Jerusalem which merits a place in our narrative, because it proves a keen understanding of the situation. "The whole city," she says, "was terror-stricken, and every one hid in the remotest part of their houses. The sacrifice was interrupted; there was general confusion, . . . and silence reigned everywhere. The greater number were a prey to remorse, and few thought of the Pasch. At the place where the Porch and the Sanctuary adjoined, the walls had so separated that it was possible to pass through the opening. The curtain which veiled the Sanctuary had fallen. Everywhere were to be seen cracked walls, pillars overthrown, the earth half-open."[1]

There was a wide distance between this stupor and the morning's glorification. No one thought now of crying out, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children." If it were possible, how gladly would they have retracted those words whose effect they were now beginning to perceive. But it was too late, except for a few, whose repentance would blot out the sin; too late at least for Jerusalem and the people of Israel, vowed to ruin and dispersion. They would not have salvation; death was beginning to overtake them; and the moment was not far off

[1] *Douloureuse Passion*, iv. part.

when there would remain of them but a memory, intermingled with sadness and horror.

Whilst the city was thus filled with confusion, quite a new spirit was animating the Roman soldiers. The prodigies which accompanied the death of the Nazarene frightened them [1] and disposed them to recognize the intervention of a Higher Power. The dying Victim's patience and benignity, the majesty of His last moments, appealed to their hearts. The centurion, more attentive and better disposed, had anticipated them in this transformation. When he saw Our Lord bow His Head, he had glorified God, according to Saint Luke's words.

"Now the centurion, seeing what was done, glorified God, saying: Indeed this was a just man." [2]

The earthquake rent the last veil. With a faith worthy of the Chief of the Apostles, he cried out:

"Indeed this man was the Son of God." [3]

To which all answered, —

"Indeed, this was the Son of God." [4]

Thus the first reparation for the Deicide was offered on the very scene of the crime. It was the work of those who had raised the Cross, and it was from their leader that the Divine Victim, now departed, received the first homage paid by men to the Conqueror of Hell. Was it not a revenge worthy of a God to give life first to those who had just put Him to death?

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 54. "Having seen the earthquake, and the things that were done, were sore afraid."

[2] LUKE xxiii. 47. "Now, the centurion, seeing what was done, glorified God," etc.

[3] MARK xv. 39. "And the centurion who stood over against him, seeing that, crying out in this manner, he had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this man was the Son of God."

[4] MATTHEW xxvii. 54. "Now, the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake . . . saying: Indeed this was the Son of God."

Mary's heart must have bounded on hearing that profession of faith in the Divinity of Her Son. She saw, already, the fruits of the Redemption. The first fruits were before Her eyes, as a pledge given to Her supernatural Motherhood.

What better consolation could she receive? Her heart was cruelly torn, it is true; but with what gratitude it was raised to the Heavenly Father to thank Him for the new fruitfulness with which He had rewarded the sacrifice of her well-beloved Child.

The Holy Women, with stifled sobs, were pressing round Her. Magdalen was embracing her Divine Master's Sacred Feet, covering them with tears and kisses. John, worn out with sorrow, could not remove his eyes from the August Countenance over which the pallor of death was spreading. A few paces off, the other friends who had come to Calvary [1] were wrapped in silent contemplation, meditating on the hopes, now forever vanished, of the Kingdom of God, and the Salvation of Israel.

The centurion now retook the road to the Antonia. His duty required that he should return to Pilate, to give him an account of all that had taken place outside the city.

Had the Procurator forbidden any one to approach him, or did the Tribune who received the centurion's report delay in communicating it to his master? We know not, but, at least, it is certain that we shall shortly find Pilate surprised at the intelligence of Our Lord's Death. The shaking of the Temple must have been felt at the Antonia, too near not to suffer from the shock, and no doubt the Priests' terror infected the soldiers. Even the Governor himself could not avoid the thought that God was avenging the wrongs of the Galilæan.

[1] LUKE xxiii. 49. "They stood afar off, noting these things."

What was passing in this soul weighted with such a heavy responsibility? Probably his feelings were still more of anger against the Jews and Herod, than of actual regret for the crime he had sanctioned.

Besides, his anxiety about the report to be sent to Tiberius,[1] prevented him from listening to his conscience, always admitting that he was prepared to listen. For him, the matter was ended, badly rather than otherwise; but it could not be undone, and the wise man must accept his share of responsibility for mistakes committed, when he knows they are irreparable. This mistake was so, and all that now remained to be done was to excuse it to Cæsar, who, no doubt, would not be displeased at his delegate's care to preserve public tranquillity.

Briefly: there had been no riot; Rome's authority had not been questioned, quite the contrary, for the people had invoked it, and, so to say, given it their solemn sanction. With regard to his own behavior in the affair, Pilate testified that he had acted with a moderation and a longanimity which must win for him the good graces of the Jews, little accustomed to find him so just and patient.

He had studiously respected their rights, their laws, and their customs, by acceding to their request, by remitting the case to Herod, by proposing to them to decide the case themselves, by even trying every plan before agreeing to the Crucifixion of the Criminal. If, in the end, he left the burden of the sentence on them, it was but another proof of his desire to put humanity above legality. Could they complain because he had softened Roman harshness? Would not Tiberius applaud his prudent reserve?

[1] G. Boissier, *l'Opposition sous les Césars*, p. 22. Compare Tertull., *Apologet.*, 21. The Acts allude to this custom when speaking of Saint Paul being sent to Cæsar.

In this way he tried to stifle remorse. Vain effort! Remorse was waiting for him close at hand, under the same form in which, but a few hours before, the warning was invested which he had disregarded. Claudia soon made her appearance, and the haughty representative of the Empire was disturbed at the questioning look in her eyes, even before her lips framed the words,—

"What have you done with that Just Man?"

But Death would not, it seems, have exercised, in its plenitude, the right acquired by Sin, if the Son of God did not suffer all the consequences thereof. After the soul is separated from the body, it enters a region of waiting and purification, whence it is delivered by Divine Mercy at the appointed hour, and introduced into Eternal Happiness. Such is the lot of all who die in the Lord,[1] a few excepted, whom we are not allowed to take into consideration, from the moment wherein was accomplished the Redemption of the World. But before this Redemption, it was quite different. The souls justified by the hope of the Messiah awaited His coming in that intermediate state of which Saint Thomas speaks to the following effect: "The name of Limbo is suited to the place and to the condition of the Saints before Christ's coming. Sometimes this place and this condition are called Abraham's bosom, on account of the repose suggested by these words; sometimes the bosom of hell, because these latter suppose the absence of glory.

"But, under these two names, they are one and the same thing. . . . Those who dwelt in Limbo felt a great joy in the hope of glory, but not without sadness at its delay. But they suffered no sensible pain for the sins which they had expiated, whether

[1] Apoc. xiv. 13. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

during their lifetime or since their entrance into eternity, because that place and that condition were absolutely distinct from those of Purgatory."[1]

Consequently, the Saints of the Old Testament, from Adam to John the Baptist; the whole line of Patriarchs and Prophets, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, Joshua, and David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel; all the illustrious women, Sarah, Leah, Rachel, Deborah, Judith, Esther; the latest ancestors of Christ, Anne, Joachim, Joseph, were awaiting in Limbo the fulfilment of the promise made to man after his fall in the terrestrial Paradise. It was indeed becoming that the First-Born of the new generation should open the Gates of Heaven and enter therein at the head of those who had been ruined by the first-born of the old generation.

But it was fitting that He Himself, answering for this fallen humanity, should suffer the waiting, and descend into Limbo, so as to complete His likeness to other men. Then He could rise again, and thus give His Brethren the assurance and the pledge of their own resurrection, to be followed by their entrance into Eternal Happiness, where He Himself was going to dwell forever. However rapid may have been His passage through what the Scripture calls the shades of death, it had to be accomplished; and it is an article of Our Faith, recorded in the Apostles' Creed, that the Saviour descended into Hell: "*descendit ad inferos.*"

[1] *Summ. Theol.*, iii. q. lii. 2, 5. The Jews believed, like us, in the existence of Limbo. The book *Colbo*, fol. 136, represents the Patriarchs and Prophets, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, with all the Kings of Judah, praying and weeping whilst waiting the advent of the Messiah. But Jewish fanaticism would not allow in Limbo the ten tribes of Israel separated by Jeroboam, nor those who had perished in the Deluge. SAINT PETER alludes to this in his first Epistle, iii. 18.

Saint Peter, in his first Epistle,[1] and Saint Paul, in that addressed to the Ephesians,[2] have preserved for us the rememblance of Christ's descent into Limbo. The Gospel of the Nazarenes[3] relates that two of God's servants who died forty years before appeared in the Temple, on the Day of the Resurrection, and related how the elect had bounded with joy at the sight of the Redeemer, whilst the demons were lost in melancholy. No doubt, those other elect whom Saint Matthew shows us leaving their tombs, entering the Holy City, and appearing to a great many,[4] did the same.

Thus, even in those hours of gloom, the Divine Word did not remain inactive. Having evangelized the living, He evangelized the dead,[5] according to the words of Saint Peter, and bore to Hell the good news of the re-establishment of God's Kingdom amongst men.

His Sabbath is not the inertia of exhausted strength. It is another form of activity, sweet, joyful, restorative, full of promise for the morrow, as it is full of works accomplished. "If He sleep His heart watches,[6] and continues to pour out on all those whom He can reach, consolation, hope, and peace.

[1] I PETR. iii. 18–19; iv. 6.

[2] EPHES. iv. 8–10.

[3] LUDOLPH, *Vita Christi*, ii. part, c. lxxiv. 5.

[4] MATTHEW xxvii. 52–53. "And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept, arose. And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many."

[5] I PETR. iv. 6. "The gospel preached also to the dead."

[6] CANTIC. v. 2. "I sleep, and my heart watcheth."

SIXTH BOOK

AT THE TOMB

CHAPTER I

THE ENTOMBMENT

"Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, . . . and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. But Pilate . . . gave the body to Joseph. And Joseph, buying fine linen, and taking him down, wrapped him up in the fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewed out of a rock; and he rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre." — MARK xv. 43–46.

AFTER the first impulse of fear to which they yielded, like every one else, the High Priests regained sufficient courage to consider the exigencies of the moment. On account of the Paschal solemnities, they would be obliged to have the bodies of those crucified removed. Such a dismal spectacle must not remain to throw a gloom over the rejoicings on that great Day.[1] Moreover, the Law prescribed that the dead bodies should not be left hanging on the gibbets after sunset.[2]

At least, such were the reasons which they gave to the Procurator, when they requested him to order

[1] JOHN xix. 31. "Then the Jews (because it was the parasceve), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day (for that was a great sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."

[2] DEUTER. xxi. 22–23; JOSHUA viii. 29. Relating to the removal at sunset of the bodies of criminals who were executed. The MISCHNA (*Sanhedrim*, vi. 5) recalls the same custom. It can also be found in Philo (*In Flaccum*, 10).

the executioners to give the criminals their death-blow, and to remove their corpses.

Pilate seemed convinced of their motives. But is it quite certain that he did not recognize in the Priests' eagerness a secret fear of Him Who was hanging on the highest Cross on Calvary? The darkness was clearing away, the earth had ceased to tremble; but the evidence of the crime with which these prodigies were connected, was still visible and speaking. The people could not fail to see and hear Him. They might be inclined to revenge Him, if excited by His disciples. Therefore, this embarrassing evidence must be got rid of as soon as possible. True, a voice has sometimes come from the tomb,[1] but a corpse is much more eloquent. The Roman did not forget the use Antony made of the bleeding wounds in the side of Julius Cæsar.[2]

However, with ironical friendliness, he ordered the bodies to be taken down, and the crosses to be removed. A decurion at once summoned the men appointed for this duty, probably some of the army servants, and then, with the four soldiers required by the regulations, set out for the place of execution.

The scene was indeed changed. No longer any crowd, no more tumult. A few poor women were weeping at the Feet of the Nazarene, gathered round His Mother, who was fainting in the arms of the one faithful friend. The only sound which disturbed the evening stillness was the groans of the thieves, still in their agony. The ravine, the hills, were now deserted. In one moment, Fear had produced emptiness and silence. In like manner, had the exterminating Angel, long ages before, destroyed all trace of Sen-

[1] HEBR. xi. 4. "Being dead, yet speaketh."
[2] SUETON., *In Cæsar.*, 84.

nacherib's army,[1] on the very place where the Saviour had just expired.

According to custom, the executioners broke the legs of the two thieves [2] whose crosses had attracted no sympathy; whilst the soldiers, with respectful pity, scattered the women grouped around the Cross of Our Divine Lord. The account given by the centurion of the Prophet's Death had, no doubt, impressed the legionaries, and his lieutenant, though he was not present at that last scene of the Passion, must, none the less, have gone to Calvary with kindly feelings towards the Nazarene's friends.

Be this as it may, one glance was sufficient to show him that the death-blow was unnecessary in the case of Our Lord; all was indeed over, and the men might retire. But, lest he should be reprimanded for not exactly performing his duty, he ordered a lance to be run through the Sacred Side of the Redeemer. Therefore a soldier named Longinus,[3] approached and obeyed the order, driving the sword with such force through the Right Side that it came out under the left arm-pit.[4] Blood mingled with water flowed from the Wound,[5] a proof that the point of the weapon had pierced the pericardium, which was sufficient in itself to cause death, if the Crucified Victim had not already given up the ghost. According to tradition, some drops of the Precious Blood fell on the spear-

[1] II PARALIPOM. xxxii. 21.

[2] JOHN xix. 32. The *Crurifragium* was only practised on slaves and prisoners of war, but the "*coup de grâce*" was a common custom. See POLYB., *Hist.*, I. c. lxxx.; AMMIAN. MARCELLIN., *Hist.*, xiv. 9.

[3] *Martyrology*, Rome, 25 March. Compare BOLLAND, *eadem die*, and BARONIUS, *ad anno* 34.

[4] PRUDENT., *De Passione Christi*, hymn viii. It is evidently inspired by the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. Saint Bridget and Catherine Emmerich relate the fact in the same manner.

[5] JOHN xix. 34. "But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side and immediately there came out blood and water."

man's forehead, and the sore eyes with which he was afflicted were instantly cured. At the same moment, his soul received the Light of Faith. One day, he was to render to His Master, blood for Blood, by crowning a long and fruitful Apostolate with martyrdom.[1]

Thus were fulfilled the words of Holy Scripture. "Neither shall you break a bone thereof," and the Prophecy of Zachariah, "And they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced."[2]

Whilst these things were taking place on Calvary, the Procurator was conferring with one of the Sanhedrists in his palace of the Antonia.

This man, already known to us, was called Joseph. He was a native of Arimathea, the Rentis of modern Judea, a little town through which the pilgrim passes on the road from Jaffa to Naplouse.[3] A member of the Great Council, famous for his noble birth, his wealth, and his virtues,[4] he had, according to an authentic tradition, found signal favor with the Roman Governors, and especially with Pontius Pilate.[5] Although a disciple of Our Lord, he had conceived it due to his interests to maintain secrecy with regard to his convictions.[6] But, on the convocation of the Sanhedrim the previous evening, he had formally

[1] LUDOLPH, *Vita Christi*, c. lxiv. According to Saint Isidore, who makes Longinus a Bishop and a Martyr. He died at Cæsarea of Cappadocia, according to the *Martyrology*. Bartolini fixes his burial-place near Lyons, *De Latere Christi*, vi. The Sacred Lance is preserved at Rome in the Church of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem.

[2] EXOD. xii. 46; ZACHAR. xii. 10. Compare JOHN xix. 36–37.

[3] This is the most probable conjecture, up to the present.

[4] LUKE xxiii. 50. "And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, who was a counsellor, a good and just man." Compare MATTHEW xxvii. 57; MARK xv. 43; JOHN xix. 38.

[5] LUDOLPH, *op. cit.*, c. lxv.

[6] JOHN xix. 38. "A disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews."

refused to have any share in that iniquitous judgment.[1]

No doubt he had watched from a distance the various phases of the Agony of Our Lord, lost in the crowd, like so many other timid souls, broken-hearted, yet silent.

The last cry of the Divine Victim had re-echoed in the very depths of his soul. Strange thing! This man who feared to confess his faith in the living Messiah, could not resist his desire to render Him homage in death. The very excess of his grief and confusion[2] made him bold.

He set out at once for the Antonia, prepared to brave the Procurator's anger and the hatred of the Jews whom he was to meet at the fortress gates, returning from their audience with the Governor, in which they had requested him to order the death-blow to be given to the criminals. He was introduced without delay, as was fitting in the case of a man of such importance. Pilate respected those whose characters he appreciated. In a few words, Joseph explained the cause of his visit. He asked for the Body of the Nazarene, that he might render Him the last honors.[3]

He ran the risk of being refused, Roman custom scarcely favored his wishes,[4] and the Governor might fear to offend the High Priests by a concession con-

[1] LUKE xxiii. 51. "The same had not consented to their counsel and doings."

[2] MARK xv. 43. "Went in *boldly* to Pilate." "*Audacter* introivit ad Pilatum." The word *audacter* evidently refers to Pilate' smood at the moment, rather than to his ordinary humor or his relations with Joseph.

[3] MATTHEW xxvii. 58. "He went to Pilate, and asked the body of Jesus."

[4] ULPIANUS, *Digest*, xliii. 24, i. (*De Cadaver punit.*). Compare HORACE, *Epist.*, i. 16; PLAUTUS, *Miles*, ii. 4.

trary to the local traditions,[1] even if they did not regard it as a disclaimer, on his part, of their conduct with regard to the Criminal.

There were, it is true, precedents of which he could take advantage, as an Israelite and a subject of Rome. But could he hope that Pilate would conform to these without exacting considerable compensation, as many others in his place[2] had done, especially when it was a question of openly defying the passions of the Sanhedrim?

The price did not frighten him; he was rich enough to pay the sum demanded. But would he succeed in communicating his own resolution to him who had shown himself so sadly irresolute throughout the whole of that fatal day.

Pilate was surprised that Our Lord was already dead. Usually, those crucified lived much longer, and what he had seen of supernatural in this Man did not incline him to credit such a short agony. At his order, the centurion who had presided at the execution came to testify to the truth of Joseph's statement.[3] He had seen the King of the Jews die, and could certify that the soldiers sent to Calvary would have no need to break His Legs, as in the case of His companions in suffering.

Pilate responded to the officer's declarations by ordering the Body of his client to be given to Joseph.

The Gospel emphasizes this unusual graciousness,[4]

[1] MAIMONIDES, *Sanhedrim*, xv. The *Sanhedrim* had appointed two burial-places for those condemned to death, one for those who were stoned, the other for those crucified (SEPP, iii. p. 65).

[2] CICERO, *In Verrem*, v. 45–51. For the exceptions, see ULPIANUS, *loc. cit.*

[3] MARK xv. 44–45. "But Pilate wondered that he should be already dead. And sending for the centurion, he asked him if he were already dead. And when he had understood," etc.

[4] Id. xv. 45. "*He gave* the body to Joseph." The Roman governors often made the relatives of the criminals pay dearly for this favor.

of which the motive was evidently to please the petitioner, whilst revenging himself on the Scribes and Pharisees.

A messenger conveyed the Procurator's wishes to the decurion, whilst Joseph hastened to buy the linen required for the burial, — a winding-sheet of fine linen,[1] wherein to wrap the Body, bands to secure [2] it, and a special cloth for the Head, according to the fashion lately brought from Egypt.[3]

The great Bazaar was near the Antonia; his purchases were quickly made, and a few moments afterwards the Sanhedrist, followed by his domestics, passed through the Judgment Gate.

At the same time, Nicodemus arrived, that Doctor of the Law who had, long ago, defended Our Lord before the Great Council,[4] and who, likewise, secretly believed in the Divine Mission of the Prophet of Nazareth. Informed by his colleague, he came to help in his pious offices for the dead Master, not having dared to confess Him publicly whilst He was alive. He brought one hundred pounds of a particular perfume, a mixture of myrrh and aloes,[5] intended for sprinkling the bands with which the Body was to be swathed. But this was only a provisional temporary embalming. Afterwards, they would proceed to a more complete arrangement of the tomb, in accordance with the rules observed by the Jews.[6] The declining day did not admit of anything more being done, except at the risk of violating the Sabbath.

[1] MARK xv. 46. "And Joseph, buying fine linen."

[2] JOHN xi. 44. "Bound feet and hands with winding-bands."

[3] Id. ibid. "And his face was bound about with a napkin." Compare xx. 7.

[4] Id. vii. 50–51, xix. 39.

[5] Id. xix. 39. "And Nicodemus also came . . . bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds."

[6] Id. xix. 40. "As is the manner of the Jews to bury."

Joseph then took on himself to remove the Nails,[1] which the Holy Women kept, as well as the Crown of Thorns. Mary anxiously watched the servants' movements, as they unfastened, one after the other, the stiffened Limbs, whilst Joseph and Nicodemus supported the Sacred Body in their arms, and gently slipped It to the ground.

Tradition then shows Her to us, sinking down at the Foot of the Cross, and receiving on Her lap the livid bleeding Head of Her Divine Son, which She covered with Her Tears and Kisses, intermingling them with prayers and lamentations.[2] Had the Passion a more sorrowful hour? Of what avail to ask? He alone could tell us Who, according to Saint John Chrysostom, had raised two Altars on Calvary for the twofold immolation of His own Flesh, and His Mother's Heart.

In this ocean of sorrow, every wave seemed to overwhelm and engulf Her whole Soul, without in the least lessening the bitterness of the succeeding one.

"To what shall I compare thee, or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem?" says the Church in the words of Jeremiah — "to what shall I equal thee that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? for great as the sea is thy destruction: who shall heal thee? The Lord hath done that which he purposed: he hath destroyed and hath not spared. . . . Let tears run down like a torrent

[1] The nails were collected by Saint Helena, and taken to Constantinople. One of them was fitted into the gold circlet of the Imperial Crown, which is preserved in the Treasury of Monza. One is shown in Rome, in the Church of the Holy Cross. The *Suint-Mors* of Carpentras has a third.

[2] LUDOLPH, *De Passione*, lxv. 5.

[3] "In passione Christi duo videbis altaria: unum in pectore Mariæ, aliud in Christi carne. Christus carnem, beata Maria immolabat animam."

day and night: give thyself no rest, and let not the apple of thy eye cease." [1]

Magdalen cast herself at the Feet of her Saviour to wash Them once more with her tears and dry Them with her hair. John silently wept, in the midst of the sobbing women and the soldiers, who were impressed by this mourning wherein Love assumed the aspect of Adoration. What a change!

In place of the jeers and the blasphemies, were now only to be heard protestations of love and appeals for pardon. The same hands which had brutally nailed the Living to the Cross, now scarcely dared to touch the Dead to assist at His Burial! Leaning on his lance, still wet, Longinus was praying to Him Whom he had but just now transfixed; whilst his companions, softening their voices and their manners, seemed to be protecting the poor women whom they had but a short time since treated with such roughness. Already, the Redeemer was drawing all things to Him, as He had predicted.[2] Without any delay, He was raising the trophies of His Victory over Death and Hell.

But haste was necessary. They must hurry. Night was coming on, bringing with it the great Sabbath of the Passover. The soldiers removed the crosses in order to cast them into the cistern opened at the foot of the hill, on the eastern side.

In compliance with the regulations of the Law, the instruments used at the execution had to be buried with the criminal's corpse,[3] which leads to the

[1] LAMEN. ii. 13 and 17–18.

[2] JOHN xii. 32. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself."

[3] TALMUD, *Sanhedrim*, xxxiv. 2. The three crosses were discovered by Saint Helena in the cavern into which they had been thrown. The custom of throwing away the instruments of the execution was until very recently observed in Germany, as SEPP testifies, *Vie de Jésus*, iii. p. 67.

supposition that the two thieves found their grave in the same aperture of the rock. Another regulation forbade the burial of those condemned to death in the tombs of their families.[1] They were absolutely cut off from the community, in death as in life. It was scarcely permitted to them to hope for a refuge in Divine Mercy, where they might meet with those whom they had loved on earth. The thieves entered forever into that land of oblivion,[2] where they were enveloped with a veil which no hand has ever lifted.

Did Pilate's concession include the permission necessary for the Burial of Our Lord in the Tomb of His Family? We have no authority for thinking so, for the Procurator merely gave the Body, which, strictly speaking, he was entitled to do, according to Jewish customs, but he does not seem to have wished to act contrary to these. Therefore he intrusted to Joseph the care of finding a grave, at once suitable and in conformity with the established custom. But even if he had permitted Our Lord to be laid in the Tomb at Gethsemane, there was no time to carry this into effect.

Absolute necessity required that He should be laid in a cave, provisionally, on account of the lateness of the hour.

Thus it came about that Joseph offered to the Divine Master the hospitality of the tomb at the very foot of Calvary, in the grave he had prepared for the reception of his own remains.

For this reason the Sacred Body was carried by the disciples to the foot of the hill where they rendered the first of the last offices to the Divine

[1] SEPP, *Vie de Jésus*, iii. 65–66. "The bones of a criminal were not laid with those of his fathers, until the complete putrefaction of the flesh."

[2] SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Confess.* "In regione dissimilitudinis." PSALM lxxxvii. 13. "In the land of forgetfulness."

Master, namely, the washing and purifying of His Sacred Remains. He was laid upon the rock at a place which from this circumstance has ever since retained the name of the Stone of the Anointing,[1] and may still be seen in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

With infinite care, Joseph, John, and Nicodemus removed the stains which disfigured the Remains of the Most Beautiful amongst the Children of Men.[2] The mystics[3] tell us in pages of exquisite beauty which we cannot quote, that Mary reserved for Herself the task of restoring to the Divine Face somewhat of Its sweet Majesty. She removed the thorns which remained in the Flesh; disentangled the hair, matted with Blood, and, by degrees, removed the layer of dirt and dust which rendered those Features unrecognizable. But ere long Her strength, not being equal to Her courage, gave way. The sight of the Wounds revealed by Her Hand, renewed all the sorrow of His Agony. He seemed to Her to die a thousand times the Death of the Passion. It became necessary to support Her, without however taking from Her the Precious Burden which she clasped to Her Breast. In this way, the Work proceeded slowly, amidst sighs and tears, the assistants' thoughts and cares being continually divided between the Mother and the Son.

At last, the first part of their task was completed. The livid Flesh was free from all stain, except that caused by the Blood oozing drop by drop from the wounds reopened by the ablutions. Some of the servants unrolled the linen bands and placed them

[1] It is to be found immediately on entering the Basilica, after having passed through the vestibule. It is covered with a red marble slab.

[2] Psalm xliv. 3. "Thou art beautiful above the sons of men."

[3] Saint Bridget, Ludolph, Marie d'Agréda, Catherine Emmerich, *loc. cit.*

within their master's reach, whilst the others opened the boxes of odoriferous mixture, and arranged them at the two sides of the funeral slab.

Embalmment amongst the Jews was, in truth, a rather complicated affair, though not indeed requiring such minute details as were observed by the Egyptians on similar occasions. The last named people aimed at the indefinite preservation of the body; the Jews merely intended to retard decomposition, hence they were satisfied with summary precautions. But the method of enshrouding the dead was none the less very different to that observed by us.

The Jews were acquainted with the use of the coffin; and the poor were committed to the earth in much the same manner as in these countries.[1]

The rich, on the contrary, were provided with tombs in the form of cenotaphs, or else they excavated out of the living rock a chamber with partitions and benches intended for the reception of the bodies wrapped in shrouds. Prudence suggested embalmment as a means of neutralizing the effects of decomposition, and numerous linen cloths saturated with aromatics were wrapped round the limbs delivered to the ravages of Death. As it was forbidden to touch the stone[2] which closed the grotto, until a very considerable time had elapsed, decomposition took place in an atmosphere impregnated with strong perfumes, and when the time came to reopen the tomb, there was nothing noticeable but that heavy odor peculiar to tombs.

To this end, the body was swathed in long bands of

[1] *Moed Katon*, fol. xxiv. 1. However, the bodies were sometimes buried without coffins.

[2] This stone was called *Golal*, and was not placed in position for four days. It should not be displaced according to a regulation of the TALMUD (LÉTARD, *Tableaux évangéliques*, ii. 499).

linen or cotton, rather narrow, laid over each other, and, according as they were rolled round, saturated with the mixture mentioned in the Gospel, — a mixture composed of almost equal parts of the gum of the *Balsamodendron myrrha*, and of the resin of the *Aquilaria agallochum*, reduced to powder. The natural heat of the climate soon caused this mixture to melt, so that it stuck the bands together, and made a compact mass of the flesh and the shroud.

Over all, bands were crossed still more tightly in all directions, so that at last the corpse was swathed as we see depicted on the bas-reliefs of the sarcophagi of the Lateran on which the Raising of Lazarus is so often represented. The head was covered with a double hood which the same bas-reliefs represent most faithfully.[1] The first hood left the face uncovered, and was tied under the chin; the other veiled the face and was fastened by the last little band rolled round the neck.

The linen intended for the burial was very carefully chosen, and was of rather high price; but it was not customary to use silk or purple, even in embroideries on the edge of the linen or cotton. Joseph bought the finest *byssus*, a muslin cambric of wonderful lightness, several folds of it being scarcely as thick as one of ordinary material, and yet it was so strong as to resist the effects of time.[2] These tissues were brought mostly from Egypt, where they were manufactured with all the particular care manifested in that country for the garments of the dead. They were white with borders of various shades, according to

[1] Cahors and Carcassonne glory in possessing these *sacred hoods* which covered Our Divine Lord's head in the tomb. Compare JOHN xi. 44 and xx. 7.

[2] Several churches have winding-sheets in very good condition. Aix-la-Chapelle, Besançon, and Compiègne, shared this privilege, but the shrouds in the latter places have disappeared.

the taste of the period or the country. The mummies in our museums are taking their last sleep wrapped in stuffs absolutely similar to those offered by several churches to the veneration of the faithful as having swathed the Sacred Limbs of Jesus Christ.[1]

Meanwhile, the folds of the winding sheets rose from the Feet to the Shoulders. Soon the Face alone was visible, paler still amidst all that whiteness. In conformity with the Jewish tradition,[2] all present impressed a kiss on the Divine Master's Brow. Then, with a trembling hand, Mary drew the last veil over the Sacred Face, and fastened the last band. All was finished.

The faith of the disciples and the women was not yet luminous enough to illuminate the darkness into which Our Crucified Saviour had descended. Mary already perceived the dawn of the Resurrection, but through the mist of so much sorrow that she could not feel joy.[3] All the others looked at one another with eyes filled with tears. They could not resign themselves to bury within the tomb what yet remained to them of their hopes. It seemed to them that by closing it, they were also closing the future for themselves and for Israel.

No doubt, they recalled to memory the ominous words of the Prophets, "Gird thee with sackcloth, O daughter of my people, and sprinkle thee with ashes. Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth. Howl ye shepherds and cry, and sprinkle yourselves with

[1] For example, in the Guimet Museum, look at the fragment of the winding-sheet of Sesostris or Rameses II. (third hall, glass case G).

[2] STAPFER, *La Palestine*, 161.

[3] SAINT BERNARD, *Sermo Dom. infr. octav. Assumptionis.* "Num quid non eum præscierat moriturum? Et indubitanter. Numquid non sperabat continuo resurrecturum? Et fidenter. Super hæc doluit crucifixum? Et vehementer."

ashes, ye leaders of the flock, for the days of your slaughter and your dispersion are accomplished. Because the day of the Lord is at hand, the day great and very terrible."[1]

But the sun was disappearing behind the hills, and the Trumpets of the Temple would soon announce the beginning of the great Sabbath. There was not a moment to lose if they wished to have finished in time. However, a few steps would bring them to the monument wherein the Son of David was to rest for the present before rejoining Joachim and Anne in the cave of Kedron. Joseph and Nicodemus, assisted by their servants, respectfully raised the Sacred Body, and bore It across the garden-paths upon which the shadows of evening had already fallen.

How sad this procession which they would fain have made so slow, and yet which they were obliged to hurry!

But how much sadder still was the last farewell to Him Whom the door of stone was about to hide henceforth from all eyes.

Before laying the Dead to rest on the funeral bench, they laid Him down at the entrance to the Sepulchre, and those present chanted the ninetieth Psalm,[2] that which has been called "*David's Hymn of Praise*," a hymn of hope and confidence in God. Then they made the circuit of the litter whereon the Deceased lay, seven times, whilst exchanging with one another words of condolence and consolation.[3]

Mary led the mourning procession, supported by the Beloved Disciple and Magdalen, and followed by the other women,[4] after whom came Joseph and

[1] JEREM. vi. 26, xxv. 34; JOEL i. 8, etc.

[2] PSALM xc. "He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High," etc.

[3] SEPP, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.*, ii. 213.

[4] The women went first in funeral processions, in conformity with the Rabbinical regulations.

Nicodemus, whose servants, with lighted torches, illuminated this indescribable scene. The silence of Nature added still more to the effect of the lamentations, interrupted by sobs; and in the increasing darkness it seemed as if mysterious shadows were pressing round to render homage to the Son of Man sleeping in death.[1]

Around the Tomb, invisible Angels were watching, lost in contemplation of the Mystery of that Death, impatient to hail the hour when they should roll away the stone which would close the Sepulchre.

Hatred was also watching, uneasy about its triumph, anxious to seal forever the door which it feared to see reopen unexpectedly.

The following day, the very day of the Paschal solemnity, the High Priests and the Pharisees assembled at the Gates of the Antonia, and asked to see the Procurator.

"Sir," they said to him, "we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day; lest perhaps his disciples come, and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead; and the last error shall be worse than the first."

Pilate had had enough of them and their plots. His reply was curt and scornful.

"You have a guard; go, guard it as you know."[2]

It did not please the Procurator to compromise his legionaries by appointing them to such a post, for which the Temple soldiers or the police of the

[1] "Illius exequias," says Saint Augustine, "angelorum millia millium decantabant qui omnes convenerant ad sepulcrum Domini sui."

[2] MATTHEW xxvii. 62–65. "And the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir," etc.

Sanhedrim were quite sufficient. But, at the same time, he discreetly reminded them that he would like all the regulations relating to the affair to be observed.

The words, "*sicut scitis*," "*as you know*," are both menacing and contemptuous. He makes them responsible for whatever may happen. Pilate washes his hands a second time, and repeats, "Look you to it."

They went away, not at all satisfied, but more than ever resolved to falsify the Prophet's predictions.

They established a regular fortification around the Sepulchre, according to the words of the Gospel. They sealed the joints of the door with the official seal, and posted sentries all around, in the ravine and on the hill, whose orders were to drive away any one who might try to approach.[1]

These precautions taken, a smile of triumph lighted up their faces, "Galilæan, you may sleep now in peace. Nothing shall approach you to disturb your repose, until that third day, after which even the most deluded minds will regard you as dead indeed. You were not able to come down from the cross; you shall not come forth from the tomb where even echo will not repeat your cry from the cross, 'My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.'"

If they had understood the Scriptures properly, they would have recalled the words of the Psalmist, protesting against death, in the very name of Christ of Whom he was the figure, "My flesh shall rest in hope! Because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor wilt Thou give Thy holy one to see corruption."[2]

[1] MATTHEW xxvii. 66. "And they, departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone."

[2] PSALM xv. 9–10.

CHAPTER II

THE RESURRECTION

"After three days, I will rise again." — MATTHEW xxvii. 63.
"He is not here; for he is risen as he said." — MATTHEW xxviii. 6.
"Why seek you the living among the dead?" — LUKE xxiv. 5.

WHILST the Sabbath lasted, the Holy Women remained in their houses,[1] dividing the long hours of that day between pious practices and sorrowful communings on the past. They longed to regain their liberty, that they might attend to the offices to be rendered to the Master in His Tomb. Scarcely had the stars announced the close of the day than they hastened to purchase the aromatics and perfumes which were required to embalm the Body,[2] for they were not all satisfied with the hasty burial directed by Nicodemus and Joseph. For them, Our Lord had suffered death, the common lot of all the children of men, and the thought of the Resurrection, so often predicted, did not even enter their minds.

Their sole anxiety was to offer a last token of love to Him Who had left them never to return, and they longed for this opportunity, urged as they were by an impatience the origin of which they did not divine.

[1] LUKE xxiii. 56. "and returning, they prepared spices and ointments; and on the sabbath day, they rested, according to the commandment."

[2] MARK xvi. 1. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalen and Mary *the Mother* of James and Salome bought sweet spices that coming they might anoint Jesus."

Therefore, as soon as the earliest streaks of dawn were silvering the sky,[1] they set out for Calvary, led by Magdalen, always the first and most ardent in the service of her Divine Friend. They were very much perplexed as to what means they should employ for opening the Sepulchre.

"Who shall roll us back the stone,"[2] they said, as they recalled the dimensions of the block rolled before the door by the lusty arms of Joseph's servants. They were evidently ignorant of what the Priests had done, and of the presence of the guards around the monument, which is explained by their enforced seclusion during the Sabbath.

But they were soon to have a different cause for anxiety. The earth was shaken by a violent disturbance, as on the preceding evening.[3]

The thunder-bolt seemed to strike the garden of the Sanhedrist, and almost immediately some men passed them, returning to the city, who were as frightened as they themselves. These were the guards belonging to the Great Council, whom terror had driven from their posts.

At the moment when the earth shook, the Lord came forth from His Tomb. An angel, instantly appearing, rolled back the stone, and then seated himself thereon. His garments were white as snow and rays of splendor flashed like lightning from his brow.[4] The soldiers, at first struck to the ground,

[1] MATTHEW xxviii. 1. "And in the end of the sabbath when it began to dawn;" LUKE xxiv. 1. "And on the first day of the week, very early in the morning;" JOHN xx. 1. "When it was yet dark."

[2] MARK xvi. 3. "And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the sepulchre?"

[3] MATTHEW xxviii. 2. "And behold there was a great earthquake."

[4] Id. ibid. 2. "For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow."

as soon as they recovered their sense fled precipitately,[1] recognizing the women just as little as these latter recognized them.

Meanwhile, calm was restored to nature, and the friends of Christ entered the enclosure.

A few paces off lay the stone, leaving the entrance to the Tomb wide open.[2] Most undoubtedly, the grave had been violated, and the Body removed by sacrilegious hands. Without waiting for any more, Magdalen, in despair, sought John's dwelling, near to which she met Peter. "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre," she cried; "and we know not where they have laid him."[3]

Peter and John at once set out at a rapid pace for Calvary,[4] followed by Magdalen, a prey to the most intense agitation. The distance was rather considerable, and some time must have elapsed before the Disciples reached the Garden, — an hour, perhaps, which allowed the sun to rise above the horizon.[5]

In the interval, a marvellous incident occurred. Mary Salome and Mary the mother of James had gone to the Tomb and entered the porch to investigate the outrage committed against the Lord. But they were dazzled by the light which flooded the interior. Fear stayed them at the threshold, whence they could perceive two angels seated, one at each end of the funeral bench, and resplendent with supernatural light. They instantly veiled their faces, and

[1] MATTHEW xxviii. 4. "And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men."

[2] MARK xvi. 4. "And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great."

[3] JOHN xx. 2.

[4] Id. xx. 3–4. The distance from the Tomb of Our Lord to John's house on Mount Sion, is about five hundred yards. Magdalen must have traversed it twice — first, alone, then with the two Apostles.

[5] MARK xvi. 2. "And very early in the morning the first day of the week . . . the sun being now risen."

prostrated, so as to avoid, according to the advice of the Scripture,[1] that vision, dangerous even unto death. One of the angels, he who sat on the right, addressed them: —

"Fear not you; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as he said. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid. But, go, tell His disciples and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see him, as He told you."[2]

Filled with fear and with joy, the two women retired. Not knowing at first what course to pursue, they did not immediately obey the Angel's command.[3] Perhaps they knew not where to find Peter, nor, failing him, to whom they should apply. At least, we shall soon meet them again, with the other Holy Women, returning to the Garden, no doubt in order to see the Heavenly Messengers again, and hear once more the assurance of the Resurrection. They had just gone away, when John appeared, followed by Peter, whose movements were retarded by age and remorse. When he reached the porch, the Evangelist stooped down, but did not, however, enter, from respect for the Chief of the Apostles. He saw the linen cloths laid on the ground, but the Angels were there no longer. Peter entered, soon followed by John, and both ascertained that the winding-sheets had been carefully folded and put together, with the exception of the covering for the head,[4]

[1] DEUTER. v. 25; JUDGES xiii. 22.

[2] MATTHEW xxviii. 5; MARK xvi. 7.

[3] MARK xvi. 8. "But they going out, fled from the sepulchre; For a trembling and fear had seized them, and they said nothing to any man, for they were afraid."

[4] JOHN xx. 3–7. "Peter, therefore, went out, and that other disciple; and they came to the sepulchre. And they both ran together; and that other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the

which was laid apart from the others. There was nothing to suggest a removal of the Body. The Dead had Himself, thrown aside His shroud, leisurely, like one who awakens quietly from sleep, and puts his bed in order before resuming work in His vineyard or in his fields.

This was a ray of light for them. John saw and believed,[1] as he says himself. Peter was lost in admiration.[2] Both returned to their home[3] without any further thought of seeking the Body of Him Whom they knew now to be risen from the dead. They did not need the Angel's testimony. Besides, it was fitting that the faith of the Prince of the Apostles and of the Beloved Disciple should be excited by the Master's own words, and not by those of messengers. They remembered the prophecy which announced the Resurrection; and though they did not understand its import, yet they trembled with gladness at seeing it realized.[4]

Magdalen had not yet reached this stage. She left the two disciples to their investigation, and then to their meditations without appearing even to notice them. When they went away, she remained,[5] seeing

sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen-cloths lying, but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen-cloths lying. And the napkin, that had been about his head, not lying with the linen-cloths, but apart, wrapt up, into one place."

[1] JOHN xx. 8. "He saw and believed."

[2] LUKE xxiv. 12. "Went away, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

[3] JOHN xx. 10. "The disciples therefore departed again to their home." They seem to have lived apart from the other disciples, and to have joined them in the evening only. (LUKE xxiv. 33.)

[4] Id. xx. 9. Compare FOUARD, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.*, ii. p. 408, note 4.

[5] SAINT GREGORY, *Homil. XXV, in Evang.* "A monumento Domini, etiam discipulis recedentibus, non recedebat; exquirebat quem non invenerat: flebat inquirendo, et amoris sui igne succensa, ejus, quem ablatum credidit, ardebat desiderio."

nothing but that overturned stone, thinking of nothing but to find again the vanished Body. Leaning against the door-posts, gazing into the void,[1] she wept bitterly. As she wept, she stooped and looked into the Sepulchre.[2] The two angels again became visible, and spoke to her.

"Woman, why weepest thou?"[3]

"Because," she replied, "they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."[4]

Had she any consciousness of the angelic vision? Everything proves the contrary. Two men were speaking to her who knew not the secret of her anguish, and, no doubt, could give her no assistance.[5] Hence we see her turning round at once at the sound of approaching footsteps. It was Our Lord Himself, Who stood some distance away. She did not recognize Him,[6] whether because He so willed, or because she still continued casting her tear-dimmed glance all around in hopes of discovering Him Whom she was seeking.

"Woman," said Our Lord, "why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?"[7] At this question which had been already put to her by the tenants of the tomb, Magdalen saw in the new-comer only a stranger whose face mattered little to her, but who might be the keeper of the garden. By His inquiry as to what she was

[1] "Stabat," says Origen, "et circumspiciebat si forte videret quem quærebat."

[2] JOHN xx. 11. "But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre."

[3] Id. ibid. 12–13.

[4] Id. ibid. 13.

[5] LUDOLPH, *Vita Christi*, ii. pars, c. lxxii. 2. "Illa putans eos interrogare quasi nescientes et non angelos esse sed homines," etc.

[6] JOHN xx. 14. "When she had said these words, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing; *and she knew not that it was Jesus.*"

[7] Id. ibid. 15.

seeking, He seemed to assert a right of vigilance and control.

Her voice assumed an accent of entreaty, at once humble and passionate, that He would answer her.

"Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."[1]

A touching delusion of the love which believes itself capable of anything, once it is a question of serving those whom it loves. And her eyes still searched the darkness, yet dense beneath the trees and the rocks.

"Mary," said the man of whom she was taking no notice, pronouncing her name slowly.

Her face grew radiant. She trembled from head to foot, and she knelt down, crying out in a stifled voice, "Master!" for it was He, and now she would fain clasp Him, as if to prevent Him disappearing again. But He gently motioned her back. "Do not touch me;" He said, "for I have not yet ascended to My Father. But go to my brethren, and say to them: I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God."[2]

"Thus," says Père Lacordaire, "at this solemn moment of the Resurrection of Our Saviour, it is not to His Mother that Jesus appears at first; it is not to Saint Peter, the foundation of the Church, and the crown of theology; nor to Saint John, the beloved Disciple; it is to Mary Magdalen, that is to say, to the converted sinner, to sin changed into love by penance. The Saviour had said before:

"'There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance." But it was indeed a Divine interpretation of those words to allow Mary Magdalen the privilege of first beholding the Son of God, Risen

[1] JOHN xx. 15. [2] Id. ibid. 17.

from the Dead, Conqueror of the Devil, of Sin, the World, and of Death, and at the same time, by this Apparition, to let her be the first to receive the consoling certainty of men's eternal salvation. What love could merit the glory of this appearance, and what were the sentiments with which this reward of love must have been received? This is an abyss which neither the words nor the mind of man can fathom. I partly understand; I catch a glimpse of it, I adore, and if I can do no more, at least I always pause with affecting thoughts, at those words: He first appeared to Mary Magdalen. There is a star on the brow of this illustrious and blessed woman which never pales, and which to the end of time shall rejoice all those who study, in a soul enlightened by God, the mystery of His intercourse with us." [1]

When leaving her, Our Lord sent Magdalen on a mission to the Apostles, which she performed without delay.

"I have seen the Lord, and these things he said to me." [2] But they did not believe her: quite the contrary. They were convinced that she was raving, and the return of the other women did not in the least lessen their incredulity.[3] However, they insisted that they had also seen the Master risen from the dead. As they were returning to the city, they met Joanna of Chusa and several others, who were also coming back from the Sepulchre, where they had found the Angels and heard the same words as their companions.

"Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying: The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands

[1] LACORDAIRE, "*Sainte Madeleine*," v.
[2] JOHN xx. 18. "Mary Magdalen cometh, and telleth the disciples."
[3] MARK xvi. 11; LUKE xxiv. 9–11.

of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."[1]

The recollection of these prophetic words[2] was recalled to them, and they trembled with gladness and admiration. They were all going to relate their vision to the Disciples, when on the road the Divine Master Himself appeared to them.

"All hail,"[3] He said in sweetest tones. But they had already thrown themselves at His Divine Feet, which they kissed. "Fear not," He continued, "Go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee; there they shall see me."[4]

These repeated announcements had no effect on the Apostles, who were more obstinate in their despondency than the Sanhedrists in their illusions. In fact, these latter did not refuse to believe the soldiers' story,[5] when they went to excuse themselves to the High Priests. They instantly convoked the Ancients, and held a Council. The guards' account was distinct, convincing, and calculated to produce the most grievous effect on the people. Their course was clear, unless they wanted to bow before the divinity of the Nazarene. They gave the soldiers money — a great sum of money[6] — with this injunction: "Say you his disciples came by night, and stole him away when we were asleep. And if the governor shall hear of this, we will persuade him and secure you."[7]

[1] LUKE xxiv. 5–7.

[2] Id. ibid. 8. "And they remembered his words."

[3] MATTHEW xxviii. 9. "And behold, Jesus met them, saying: All hail."

[4] Id. ibid.

[5] Id. ibid. 11. "*Some* of the guards."

[6] Id. ibid. 12.

[7] Id. ibid. 11–15. It is evident that the Sanhedrists feared to draw upon themselves the anger which they pretended to dread for their emissaries.

"Oh," exclaims Saint Remigius, "what mistaken prudence to accept sleep as a witness! If the guards were asleep, what could they see? If they saw nothing, what testimony could they give? And if they saw the thieves, why not arrest them?"[1]

The Sanhedrists did not trouble themselves about such trifles. Secure of the guards they had bribed, they took no heed of the others, and hastened to spread the lie amongst the Jews to whom it would be pleasing.

At the time when Saint Matthew wrote his Gospel, about the year 41, the version of the Sanhedrim still found favor,[2] and, what will surprise reflective minds, it has come down through the centuries, always being accepted by the Israelites with the same credulity.[3]

Tertullian has taken it upon himself to tell us what Pilate thought of the affair, by asserting that he was a Christian at heart, when he drew out his report for Cæsar.[4] He had no thought of pursuing the guards of the sepulchre. He was better employed. No doubt he listened with anxious attention to the accounts of the multiplied apparitions by which the Nazarene gave proof of His Resurrection.

Whilst the Apostles were doubting, the Sanhedrists forging their lies, and the Procurator meditating on his message, the day waned, and, as evening approached, two men, formerly disciples of the Crucified, went down from Jerusalem toward Emmaus,

[1] Apud LUDOLPH, *loc. cit.* Compare SAINT AUGUSTINE in PSALM lxiii.

[2] MATTHEW xxviii. 15. "So, they, taking the money, did as they were taught: and this word was spread abroad among the Jews, *even unto this day.*" Compare SAINT JUSTIN, *Dialog. cum Tryphone*, p. 335.

[3] See the *Toldos Jeschu*, pp. 19–20 (*Tela ignea Satanæ*, iii.).

[4] APOLOGET., xxi. Compare SAINT CHRYSOSTOM, *Homil. VIII, in Pasch.*

a little place distant about sixty stadium.[1] Tradition calls them Simon and Cleophas.[2] It appears that Saint Luke had no necessity to name them, as they were sufficiently known to his contemporaries.[3]

As they went along, they talked of the events of the last few days, and confided to one another their impressions which were most desponding.

All at once, a man appeared, coming along another path. He joined them familiarly, though they did not recognize Him, their eyes being closed by a Superior Power.[4]

"What are these discourses," He said to them, "that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad?"

"Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem," replied Cleophas, "and hast not known the things that were done there in these days?"

"What things?" inquired the stranger.

"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, Who was a prophet mighty in work and word before God and all the people. And how our chief priests and princes delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he that should have redeemed Israel: and now, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women, also of our company, af-

[1] Very lively discussions have been raised recently by the *savants*, regarding the situation of the Emmaus mentioned by Saint Luke. Sepp held it to be Kolonieh; Liévin considers it Koubeibeh; Guillemot prefers Nicopolis. This latter opinion seems at present the most justified, but it does not suit us to take part in this dispute, still less to decide the question.

[2] ORIGEN, *In Johann.*, i. 17; CYRILL. ALEXANDR. *in hunc loc.*

[3] LUKE xxiv. 13. "And behold two of them went the same day to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus."

[4] Id. ibid., 15–16. "Jesus, himself, also drawing near, went with them. *But their eyes were held* that they should not know him."

frighted us, who, before it was light, were at the sepulchre. And, not finding his body, came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that he is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre; and found it so as the women had said: but him they found not."[1]

The man cried out in a sad and indignant voice:

"O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all the things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?" And beginning with Moses, He went through the succession of prophecies, interpreting the passages of the Scriptures in which the Messiah was mentioned. The charm of His conversation shortened the road. When the disciples reached the end of the journey, He feigned to go further.

But they strove to detain Him, saying: "Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent."

He yielded to their persuasions, and entering with them, they sat down to the evening repast. Whilst they were eating, He took bread, blessed it, and then breaking it, offered it to them. . . . It was the Lord! Their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him, but He had already vanished from their sight.

"Was not our heart burning within us," they said to each other, "whilst he spoke in the way, and opened to us the scriptures?"[2]

And, immediately, they returned to Jerusalem, to present themselves to the Apostles and to those who

[1] LUKE xxiv. 17–25. From this passage we must conclude that Peter and John doubted like the rest (for the disciples of Emmaus do not even allude to their conviction), or else they had succeeded no better than the women in trying to convince their friends. This last is evidently the better explanation, for it alone agrees with the words of Saint John (xx. 8), "he saw and believed. — *Vidit et credidit.*"

[2] Id. ibid. 32.

were with them. Before they could even open their lips, they were greeted with the exclamation, —

"The Lord is risen, indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

To which they responded by telling what had happened to them on their journey, and how they had recognized the Master in the breaking of bread.

A lesson of twofold instruction. The Apostles have bowed to Peter's word, and yet he is the only one of them who has seen the Risen Lord.[1] The disciples feel their hearts transformed on receiving the consecrated bread. Thus, from the first day, the Vicar of Christ was the pillar and ground of Truth,[2] and the consecration of bread was the sign by which Christ was recognized amongst His Faithful.[3]

Simon and Cleophas were still speaking when, suddenly, Our Lord appeared.

"Peace be to you," He said. And as they still remained troubled and frightened, He added, "It is I, fear not." But their emotion and fear increased rather than diminished, because they were convinced that they saw a spirit.

"Why are you troubled," Our Lord continued, "and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See my Hands and my Feet, that it is I myself; feel, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me to have."

And He showed them His Hands and His Feet; but still He did not succeed in vanquishing their doubts, joy and wonder had so confused them.

"Have you here anything to eat?" asked the Master finally. They hastened to produce the remains of some broiled fish, and a honeycomb, of which He partook, sharing with them, as was His wont. Then He resumed His discourse.

[1] Luke xxiv. 34. [2] I Timothy iii. 15. [3] Luke xxiv. 35.

"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me.[1] Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day." Then He reproached[2] them with their incredulity, and expounded to them the Scripture in such a manner that they thoroughly understood the sense.[3] According as He spoke, their souls were enlightened and gladdened, as had happened to the disciples of Emmaus, and like these, they, too, were filled with joy.[4] "Peace be to you," He said in conclusion. "As the Father hath sent Me, so I also send you." Then He breathed softly on their bowed heads:

"Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."[5]

It was thus that the Sacrament of Penance was instituted, according to the formal doctrine of the Council of Trent,[6] supported by all tradition. "Never was greater authority given to men."[7] True, but

[1] LUKE xxiv. 44–46. Our Lord, on this day, insists on several occasions on the necessity for Christ to suffer and to rise again, *according to the Prophets* (LUKE xxiv. 7). He aims evidently at doing away with the scandal of the Cross, by showing with what a free will He had accepted His Death and assured His Resurrection. (Compare MATTHEW xvi. and xvii. 21; MARK ix. 30; LUKE ix. 22.)

[2] MARK xvi. 14. "He upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen him after he was risen again."

[3] LUKE xxiv. 45. "Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the scripture."

[4] JOHN xx. 20. "The disciples, therefore, when they saw the Lord."

[5] Id. ibid. 21–23.

[6] SESS. xiv. cap. i. and can. 3.

[7] FOUARD, ii. p. 420; LE CAMUS, iii. p. 402.

never also did the Divine Wisdom manifest itself by more obvious opportuneness.

This power of remitting sins belonged only to God, and to communicate it was, in some sort, to deify those to whom the power was communicated. Henceforth, they had the disposition of Eternal goods; the right to open and shut the Gates of the Church and of Heaven. But was it not the right moment for that communication?

Already souls were moved to come to the Messiah, protesting their repentance, like the centurion, like Longinus, like those Priests of whose entrance into the fold of the Good Shepherd, the *Acts* will very shortly inform us.[1] Who, therefore, would assure them of pardon? Who would pronounce their admittance into the new fellowship? The Master created for Himself to all time, and in all places, representatives and collaborators, through whom He would be always and everywhere on earth, repeating the words spoken to the Paralytic, "Be of good heart, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."[2]

Meanwhile, one of the Apostles had not seen Our Lord. Where then was Thomas, the ardent disciple, who long ago exclaimed, "Let us also go that we may die with Him," and who ought, we think, to have been one of the first to meet the Risen Lord? The Gospel does not tell us that such was the case. From the exactitude with which Saint Luke relates the return of the disciples of Emmaus to the eleven whom they found gathered together,[3] in the Cenacle, we are obliged to believe that Thomas was present, whilst Simon and Cleophas told their story. He had, there-

[1] ACTS APOSTLES vi. 7. "A great multitude also of the priests obeyed the faith."

[2] MATTHEW ix. 2.

[3] LUKE xxiv. 33.

fore, gone away without waiting for the end. But why? Did he hope also to meet the Master on the road? Did he not rather experience a feeling of revolt against the illusions which revived his sorrow, and was it not a wish to fly from this aggravation of his grief?[1]

Be this as it may, he was not there at the moment when Our Lord appeared to the Apostles. And when these last told him, he answered abruptly, "Except I shall see in his Hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."[2]

"The form of this answer and the triple condition which he attaches to his act of faith, prove thoroughly how resolute and argumentative was his unbelief. He not only wanted to see, but he also required to touch the distinctive marks of his Crucified Master. We feel that the awful scene on Calvary had remained living in the imagination of the ever-loving though incredulous disciple, whose despondency was in proportion to his love.[3]

Now, eight days afterwards, the disciples being, this time, all together, Our Lord entered, though the doors were shut, and stood in the midst of them.

"Peace be to you," He said; then, turning to Thomas, "Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing."

The Apostle threw himself at his Master's feet, saying, in a trembling voice, "My Lord and my God!" thus giving more than was asked of him, for he ren-

[1] Saint Gregory (*Homil. XXVI, in Evang.*) sees a divine dispensation in this. "Non hoc casu sed divina dispensatione gestum est."

[2] John xx. 25.

[3] Le Camus, *Vie de N. S. J.-C.*, iii. p. 406.

dered testimony not only to the Humanity of the Saviour, but also to His Divinity.

"Because," responded Our Lord, "thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." [1]

Those whom the Redeemer proclaimed blessed, would soon be reckoned by thousands. From one end of the world to the other, countless voices would repeat the Angel's words, —

"He has risen as he said — *Resurrexit sicut dixit*," without having the happiness of seeing with their eyes and handling with their hands,[2] Him Whose victory over Death they acclaimed.

And, in the course of ages, these witnesses, ever more numerous and enthusiastic, were to attest down to the present time, the triumph of the Lamb that was slain for the salvation of the world.[3] Individuals and generations, dynasties and nations, were to pass away, engulfed in ruin, whence they should not rise again. But He, henceforth, standing on the stone of the Sepulchre, as on a pedestal, would see them change and perish, whilst He should remain, and His years shall not fail.[4] He is the Immortal King of ages,[5] the Ruler whom all obey; the Conqueror to whom all yield;[6] the beginning and end of everything that exists, Who is, Who was, and Who is to come, no longer with the humility befitting man, but with the splendor which surrounds the Almighty.[7]

[1] JOHN xx. 27–29.

[2] I JOHN i. 1.

[3] APOCALYPSE v. 6, 8, 12.

[4] PSALM ci. 27, 28. "They shall perish, but thou remainest. . . . And as a vesture, thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art always the self-same, and thy years shall not fail."

[5] I TIMOTHY i. 17.

[6] Sixtus the Fifth. "Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat." (Inscription on the obelisk of the Vatican.)

[7] APOC. i. 8.

We could not end this chapter without asking ourselves how it is that the Gospel has said nothing about Our Lord appearing to His Blessed Mother.

It is equally impossible to suppose that the most perfect of sons did not remember, before all, the most perfect of mothers. Saint Anselm answers that the Gospel says nothing that is useless, and that it would be superfluous to remark this apparition to the Blessed Virgin.[1] All tradition is unanimous in declaring that the preference given to Magdalen only puts her in the first place after Mary, to whom belonged, if we may speak thus, the first-fruits of the Redemption.[2]

The Gospel, no doubt, could have told us so, in a few words, as it tells so many other things, pleasant or serious.

But would our pious curiosity have been the better satisfied? To describe this scene would have required more than an inspired man, more than an angel, more than Mary herself. Let us respect the secret, and be satisfied to sing with the Church, "Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven, joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven, He whom thou wast meet to bear, as He hath promised, has arisen. Pour for us to Him thy prayer, Alleluia![3]

[1] "Nihil in ea (narratione Evangelistæ) imprudens, vel inane, vel superfluum reperitur. . . . Quis non tale scriptum superfluum diceret?"

[2] LUDOLPH, *Vita Christi*, ii. part, c. lxx. 6. "Dignum namque erat ut matrem præ cæteris visitaret et resurrectione sua prius lætificaret."

[3] *Antiphon for Easter*. "Regina cœli lætare." Ludolph justly remarks that the Church hallowed the tradition of which we have spoken by placing the Station for the Resurrection at Saint-Mary-Major. The same author alludes to a *Legenda de Resurrectione Domini* greatly esteemed in his time, which relates the first apparition of Our Lord to His Blessed Mother. Compare SAINT AMBROSE, SAINT AUGUSTINE, etc.

Thus sang the Angels at the moment when the Risen Saviour wiped away His Mother's Tears, and announced to Her the beginning of that Eternal Kingdom, the glory and happiness of which she should share with Him.

CHAPTER III

THE APPARITIONS IN GALILEE

"Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee; there they shall see me." — MATTHEW xxviii. 10.

"Then was he seen (Christ) by more than five hundred brethren at once; of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep." — I COR. xv. 6.

WHILST going towards Gethsemani, on the evening of Holy Thursday, and talking with His Disciples of the events about to take place, Our Lord said to them, —

"All you shall be scandalized in me this night. For it is written:

"*I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed.* But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." [1]

Perhaps they paid no attention to this information, apparently of secondary importance, and which was lost to them in the general prediction of the Master's sufferings and of their desertion, sad thoughts which absorbed their attention, and called forth Peter's protest, "Although all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized." [2]

But, on Easter Morning, the Angels gave the Holy Women the same information, "And going quickly tell ye his disciples that He is risen; and behold, He

[1] MATTHEW xxvi. 31–32. [2] Id. ibid. 33.

will go before you into Galilee; there you shall see him."[1] And almost immediately afterwards, Our Lord appeared to them, and repeated the mysterious formula, "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee; there they shall see me."[2]

It was difficult not to remark this persistent designation of Galilee as the place of meeting where the Master intended to appear to His disciples, and, no doubt, it attracted their attention as much as was possible in the confused state of their minds, caused by the news of the Resurrection.

They could not leave Jerusalem before the Octave of the Pasch, and, from all appearances, they deferred the consideration of the command sent to them through the women, until they should have proof of the vision in which these were glorifying.

But before the day was ended, Peter had seen His Lord in the Flesh, Simon and Cleophas had journeyed with Him to Emmaus, and the eleven had eaten and drank with Him in the Cenacle. Eight days later, Thomas saw Him, in his turn, in the midst of the Apostles, witnesses like himself of the Divine Presence, in which they could no longer hesitate to believe. What was the meaning then of an injunction which He Himself, Who had given it with so much solicitude, now rendered unnecessary?

Evidently there is a mystery here, but we are not forbidden to penetrate therein.

The apparitions of those first days had caused the Friends of the Crucified Saviour as much sorrow as consolation. They believed that He was risen, but without in the least understanding anything of this second existence, so different from the first. In vain Our Lord showed them His Sacred Hands and Feet, reminding them that spirits have neither flesh nor

[1] MATTHEW xxviii. 7. [2] Id. ibid. 10.

bones.[1] They could have no exact idea of this new life. And they were justly disconcerted by its marvellous side. Perhaps they feared being deceived by apparitions similar to those of the Friends of God, who had come forth from their tombs the evening before, and were, now, gone back into impenetrable darkness. They had been seen and heard. For a few moments they had all the appearance of restored life, as might be the case with the Master. He might have risen by means of some exceptional, but transitory power.[2] Their joy was great to behold Him, to hear Him, to touch Him, to share their food with Him; but the greater it was, the more they were frightened.

There are joys in which it is difficult to believe, which disturb the understanding more deeply than grief.[3] It seems as if their whole understanding became obscured by very reason of the brightness, doubtful in spite of the evidence, and they were on the point of crying out with the Jews, "How long dost Thou hold our souls in suspense? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."[4] But He would have answered in vain by appealing, before them, as before the Jews, to His Words and His Works. There are times and places where Truth cannot make its way successfully. Jerusalem was one of these places, and the present time one of those hours.

From the terrace of the Cenacle, the Disciples could see the High Priests' Palace, that of Herod, and

[1] LUKE xxiv. 39. "See my hands and feet, that it is I myself; handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have."

[2] Compare *Summ. theol.*, iii. q. lii. art. 3; q. liv. art. i., and q. lv. art. 6. SAINT AUGUSTINE (*Epist. ad Evodium*) is of opinion that those who had risen from their graves on Good Friday entered again into death.

[3] LUKE xxiv. 41. "And wondered for joy."

[4] JOHN x. 24.

the Prætorium. They knew where Gethsemani and Golgotha lay, down in the hollows where the eye could not reach. Within this gloomy framework were moving around them all the personages who had taken part in that Drama, the memory of which was continually recalled to them by their coming everywhere into contact with the actors therein. To reach the Temple, they had to pass the House of Antipas, and quite near where the Master had been condemned — perhaps had to step aside to make way for the Procurator, whose haughty countenance was not improved by the gloomy look which it now wore. They had to go out of their way to avoid the scorn of the Priests and their partisans. In the Temple itself, over which the Prætorium cast its gloomy shadow, they felt themselves the object of the malignant curiosity of the Jews, and afraid of all that fanaticism might suggest to an excited crowd. If they ventured out by the Gareb side, Calvary rose before them like a menace, and the empty Sepulchre was not sufficient to reassure them. The Risen Master was no longer there, it is true, but then, where was He really? In Mary's Home, illumined as it was by the joy of the Divine Mother, the Son's place remained vacant; empty also was the place which He once occupied in their circle, all the emptier because of those fugitive appearances. The realities by which they were surrounded, had nothing consoling to offer them. Should they then take no heed of them, and yield themselves to the course of the dream which seemed to them delusive?

The Priests and their accomplices, to all appearance, were now very quiet. Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of the body, Pharisees, who had related the story of the removal of the Body of Jesus, and perhaps became persuaded of it them-

selves by force of persuading others, Scribes, whose interest it was that silence should be observed, and who imposed it by keeping silence themselves, subordinates, either bribed or convinced, as easily happens to those accustomed to allow others to think for them, the crowd, renewed from day to day, preoccupied with the Paschal solemnities and distracted by the cares of the pilgrimage, all seemed to have accepted the official version of the affair, and resigned themselves to the collapse of their hopes of the Messiah. Herod forgot the shedding of the Blood of Christ, as he had forgotten that of the Precursor. As for Pilate, shut up in an inaccessible retreat, he affected not to know that the Nazarene was no longer in His Sepulchre, and that some enthusiastic women were talking of His Resurrection.

In this chaos of ideas and sentiments, the Apostles must have found it very difficult to form any decided opinion. It was necessary for them to go away, to take up their abode at a distance, so as to give matters time to explain themselves. The opportunity was afforded them by the command to repair to Galilee, their native land, far from the disturbance of Jerusalem, and near their own friends and confidants, to whom they could tell everything and ask, in peace, for advice.

When Our Lord wanted to declare His Divinity before all Israel, He led His first Disciples, destined to become His Apostles, far away from Galilee, where He had lived for thirty years, as Man only. He was bringing them back there, to assert anew His humanity, as being the most suitable place for this declaration.[1] But, at the same time, He was bringing them

[1] Saint John Chrysostom, *Homil. LXXXIII, in Matthæum.* "In ipsa gente et in ipsis fere regionibus in quibus cum eo fuerant conversati; ut et hinc crederent quoniam qui crucifixus est, ipse est

to the place whence originated The Glad Tidings, to the scene of their summons to the Kingdom of the Messiah, the scene of their first efforts and of their first successes; thus affording them particular facilities for measuring the work they had done, for comparing the results with their hopes, and for pronouncing on the person of Him, Whom they had taken for their Leader. He could then reappear in their midst, submit Himself to their examination, justify His Doctrine and His conduct, and demand once more from them in His transformed Life, the testimony which He had invoked during His anterior one. "Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God."

And thus did it happen when the termination of the Paschal solemnities permitted them to return to their own country. They were naturally attracted to the shores of Lake Gennesareth, and there they remained, taking up their abode between Capernaum and Bethsaida,[1] and living all together, or at least sufficiently near one another to assemble at the first signal, as we see in the Gospel.[2]

They found strength and consolation in this reunion, to which they were accustomed, and which, no doubt, the Master had recommended to them. Some days passed without any remarkable incident, to judge by the silence of the Sacred Writers.[3] The neighbors must have been sympathetic towards them, or at least tolerant, and nothing seems to have disquieted them.

et qui resurrexit." SAINT GREGORY adds, "Voluit etiam Dominus specialiter in Galilæa apparere ut veritas Resurrectionis probaretur, quia ibi plura miracula est operatus, et amplius conversatus et ideo melius cognitus."

[1] Or even at Capernaum, where Peter had a house. However, it is possible that, from motives of prudence, they did not settle in either locality, but beyond them.

[2] MATTHEW xxviii. 16; JOHN xxi. 1.

[3] Compare FARRAR, *Life of Christ*, p. 461.

They regained peace of mind, according as the recollections of their last journey to Jerusalem became more remote, without, however, becoming less vivid. Time and distance only dispersed the shadows with which their impressions were before confused. We all know from experience that when our feelings are too much excited, several hours must elapse before we can form a correct opinion.

Peter's band was formed of only six persons: Thomas, Bartholomew, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples, whose names are not mentioned by Saint John.[1] Now one evening Peter said to them, "I go a fishing." To which they all replied, "We also come with thee."

And immediately they set out for the shore of the lake, at some distance from Tiberias, where they went on board their vessel, and, putting out from land, cast their nets; but their labor was in vain. The whole night passed, and they caught nothing. So had it happened to them on that other night preceding their Call.[2]

The sun was rising, causing a light mist to spread over the lake, when a call from some one on the shore attracted their attention.

"Children, have you any meat?"

"No," they replied. Although the distance was only about one hundred yards, the mist prevented them discerning the features of their interlocutor, while, at the same time, it muffled the tone of His Voice. Besides, they were too accustomed to interruptions of this kind to manifest any curiosity about the person who spoke to them.

"Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find," continued the stranger. His advice

[1] JOHN xxi. 2.
[2] MATTHEW iv. 18; MARK i. 16; LUKE x. 1–11.

seemed good, and the fishermen at once acted upon it, greatly to their benefit. The net was so loaded that they could not draw it on board, just as at the first miraculous draught of fish. Suddenly a ray of light illumined the Beloved Disciple's soul.

"It is the Lord," he said to Peter. Indeed, He alone could repeat the miracle, and by renewing it in a similar place on behalf of the same fishermen, He openly revealed Himself. John was no longer afraid of being mistaken, and his whole heart went out in the cry uttered in Peter's ear.

Scarcely had the latter heard when he understood, and plunged into the waves, putting on his tunic as he did so, for he had taken it off whilst working. With a vigorous stroke, he cleft the waters the quicker to reach the Master, whilst the others plied their oars with all their might, their hearts throbbing with indescribable emotion. The Lord was yonder! They would see Him, no longer in the twilight of Emmaus, or the darkness of the Cenacle, but in the bright rays of the rising sun, which dispel all illusion and all gloom. They would see Him as they had seen Him before on the seashore, with His grave sweet smile, ready to sit down near them in the boat, whilst He talked to them of the Kingdom of God.

As they touched the sand, they saw a fish broiling on some lighted coals, and a loaf lying near, as if awaiting them.

"Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught," said Our Lord simply. It was, indeed, just as in former days. The Master was taking His part in the common toil, and inviting them to complete the preparations. He was alive! He was really alive! There was no longer any doubt about it, and this time, no one thought himself mocked by an illusion.

Peter went back to the vessel, and brought the net ashore. In it were struggling one hundred and fifty-three big fishes, which had not succeeded in breaking the meshes. No doubt the finest were chosen to add to the repast, whilst Our Lord looked on with gentle observing glance.

"Come and dine," He said, and all stretched themselves on the beach. It did not even occur to them to ask His Name, for they knew, this time, with certain knowledge, that it was the Lord.[1] Then He came to them, His hands filled with bread and fish which He distributed to them, as He was wont to do when they were taking their humble meals by the wayside, or in the grottoes of the Mount of Olives. Then He sat down beside them. They were ravished in a kind of ecstasy, and no one spoke, waiting until the Master should condescend to break the silence.

"Simon, *son* of John," He said suddenly, "lovest thou me more than these?"[2]

The Apostle thus addressed, trembled. He Who spoke was indeed the same Jesus Who once stood in the Atrium of the High Priests' dwelling, the same Whom he had denied, and Who reminded him of his weakness.

The dawn was growing brighter, and in the neighborhood, the crow of the cock was saluting the rising sun, as on that fatal morning, the remembrance of which had been just evoked.

The question, in fact, contained a veiled reproach.[3] The name by which the Divine Friend addressed Peter, was that borne by him before the Lord called him, and this return to the past seemed to do away

[1] JOHN xxi. 12. "Knowing that it was the Lord."

[2] Id. ibid. 15.

[3] The word ἀγαπᾷς, used by Our Lord denotes veneration and respect, rather than confidence and abandonment, such as is expressed by the word φιλῶ, employed by Peter in his answer.

with the pre-eminence with which the misguided disciple had formerly been invested. Simon so understood. In a voice which he tried to steady, he answered, —

"Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee."

Pious cleverness of a truly contrite heart! As the guarantee of his words, he takes the very knowledge, or rather the mercy of Jesus, Who sees shame, repentance, hope, all blended in one single sentiment, — love ready to brave everything to regain its rights.

A smile lighted up the Master's Countenance.

"Feed my lambs."

Then after a moment's pause, —

"Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me?"

Evidently He wanted reparation for the insult he had received in the High Priests' divan, but already His tone was changed, and Peter must have answered with more confidence.

"Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee."

"Feed my lambs."

Those present listened attentively to this astounding dialogue. In more solemn tones, Our Lord continued, —

"Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?"

The Apostle's heart broke; tears gushed from his eyes, and with a shiver of pain, he answered, —

"Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

"Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to thee; when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not." [1]

[1] JOHN xxi. 15–18. Compare II PETER i. 14.

The cock might crow again! The denial was expiated. The Supreme Pastor reassumed the leadership of the flock, and as the pledge of his perfect reconciliation, Our Lord foretold to him how his death should resemble His Own. If all did not then understand Him, John, the Master's Beloved Disciple, Peter's chosen companion, understood at once, and beheld uplifted on the horizon the cross of the Janiculum.[1] The Son of God was announcing to His Vicar by what death he should die.

Then he added, "Follow me," and Peter obeyed, looking round to see what became of the others. Then he perceived John, who was following also, and he could not refrain from asking,—

"Lord, what shall this man do?"

"So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? follow thou me."[2]

The strangest commentaries were made on these words amongst the disciples, according to whose interpretation of them, John was not to die, and yet, as he remarks himself, the Master did not say, "He dieth not," but, "so I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee?"

In reality, he saw the first coming of Christ, that which took place on the day of the destruction of Jerusalem, as had been predicted when Our Lord wept over the faithless city.[3]

At that time three years had already elapsed since Peter had entered into death, or rather into the most glorious immortality.[4]

None of the appearances of Our Lord can be

[1] JOHN xxi. 19. "And this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

[2] Id. ibid. 21–22.

[3] MATTHEW xxii. 37, and xxiv. 27; MARK xiii. 26; LUKE xxi. 27.

[4] The Martyrdom of Saint Peter took place in the year 67.

placed before this one as proof of the Resurrection; none in fact combined so many of the elements of conviction. There is nothing sudden or abrupt in it, like the others. Jesus seems to reveal Himself gradually, and when the Beloved Disciple says, "It is the Lord," all are already prepared to recognize Him. It is not brief like the others; it is as prolonged as the witnesses could desire in order to be convinced that they were not the sport of a hallucination. They all have leisure to see, to hear, to touch the Divine Guest, to put Him to the test of a most minute examination, in an ever-increasing light which prevented all possibility of error. It took place under circumstances of unreserve and familiarity which create intercourse between souls, and guarantee, better than seeing and hearing can do, the reality of a friend's presence.

It had all the grace, the majesty, with which the God-Man was wont to invest Himself, with something more which was owing to His entrance into a new life, and which Tabor had foreshadowed. It recalled memories, confirmed promises, and added to the prophecies. It was with difficulty that the Apostles could believe that the life they were accustomed to lead in the company of the Saviour had been interrupted by a momentary trial. The very places, the hills, the waters, the sky all seemed to join in suggesting to the Disciple, the words, so full of conviction, "It is the Lord."

However, we must not forget the other appearances mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures: that with which Saint James the Less was favored,[1] and, above all, that by which more than five hundred of the faithful, gathered around the eleven, were permitted to behold the Lord on the slopes of a mountain

[1] I Cor. xv. 7. "After that he was seen by James."

of Galilee.[1] According to Saint Paul, many of those who were present on that occasion were still living in his time, and they could recall it to the Jews and the Gentiles, as we see by the first Epistle to the Corinthians.[2]

It is a very strange thing and worthy of remark, that even at that moment, there were some who did not believe in the Resurrection of Christ.[3] Far from becoming the blind proselytes of Magdalen, as modern unbelief asserts, many refused to believe, and wanted, like Thomas, to criticise the declarations of those who said they had seen. The Apostles only yielded to evidence.

Therefore, it is not surprising that in the crowd collected on the mountain there should be some stubborn minds.

The Holy Ghost, according to Our Lord's own words, reserved to Himself the credit of dispersing the darkness and of producing in them the fulness of Faith.[4] Thus, to use the words of the Acts, "to whom also (His Apostles) he showed himself alive, after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God." [5]

The proofs given to the Apostles were also given

[1] SEPP (iii. 113) claims that this appearance took place on Tabor, and that a church was built on the spot, called Cabula, to perpetuate the remembrance. Others think that the Mount of the Beatitudes is to be preferred.

[2] I COR. xv. 6. "Then was he seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and many are fallen asleep." This apparition of our Lord is usually regarded as that related in the xviii. 16–17 of Saint Matthew.

[3] MATTHEW xxviii. 17. "But some doubted." "Quidem autem dubitaverunt." According to Sepp, this should be read: "Nullus dubitavit." But this version seems to us less justified.

[4] JOHN xv. 26. "But when the Paraclete cometh . . . he shall give testimony of me."

[5] ACTS APOSTLES i. 3.

to the world. The Crucified Lord had, indeed, died on Calvary, no one could doubt it, and no one did doubt. But, on the third day, as He had foretold, He was not to be found in the Sepulchre. To explain His Disappearance, the Pharisees were obliged to have recourse to falsehood, from fear lest the people might remember the prophecy of His Resurrection.

But, at the same time, He appeared to His friends, not only once, but on several occasions; not only to this person or that one, but to numerous groups, and finally to a crowd, numbering five hundred, not at a distance from them, or in the shade, but in broad daylight, quite close to them, allowing those present to touch Him, and eating and drinking with them, not in secret or in lonely places, but publicly and in the places where He had formerly lived.

No illusion was possible, and when on the Day of Pentecost, Peter said to the crowd which had flocked to the Cenacle, "This same being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have crucified and put to death by the hands of wicked men. Whom God had raised up,"[1] these words sufficed for the conversion of three thousand of those who heard them.

A few days afterwards, the scene was re-enacted in the Temple itself, under Solomon's Porch, when Peter repeated, "The author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses,"[2] and five thousand people joined the ranks of the believers. On being apprehended by the Great Council, Peter and John calmly declared before their Tribunal, —

"Our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead,

[1] Act ii. 23–24. Ibid. 32. [2] Id. iii. 14.

even by him this man standeth here before you whole." [1]

The Priests, unable to deny the cure to which Peter alluded, contented themselves with taking precautions lest the report of it should spread still further abroad, forbidding them also to teach in the name of Jesus. To this prohibition Peter and John simply made answer, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." [2]

Thus the testimony of the witnesses prevailed. Henceforth, the Resurrection of Christ had its place in history as an undeniable fact, and Saint Paul might give as a pledge of our own resurrection the Resurrection of Christ: the first-fruits of them that sleep.[3]

The Free-thinker in his pride is indignant that the Son of God did not deign to appear to any but His Disciples. Why should He do so?

He could not appear to every one in Israel, and the people's faith must rest on the testimony of a few. But should not these witnesses be chosen from amongst the most upright and reliable men? And was it not for this reason that Our Lord chose them from amongst His Disciples? To rely on the good faith of the Scribes and the High Priests would have been incomprehensible, even if He could claim to have convinced them.

Those who had tried to misrepresent His miracles by attributing them to Beelzebub, who had plotted the murder of Lazarus after he was raised from the

[1] Acts. iv. 10.

[2] Id. ibid. 20.

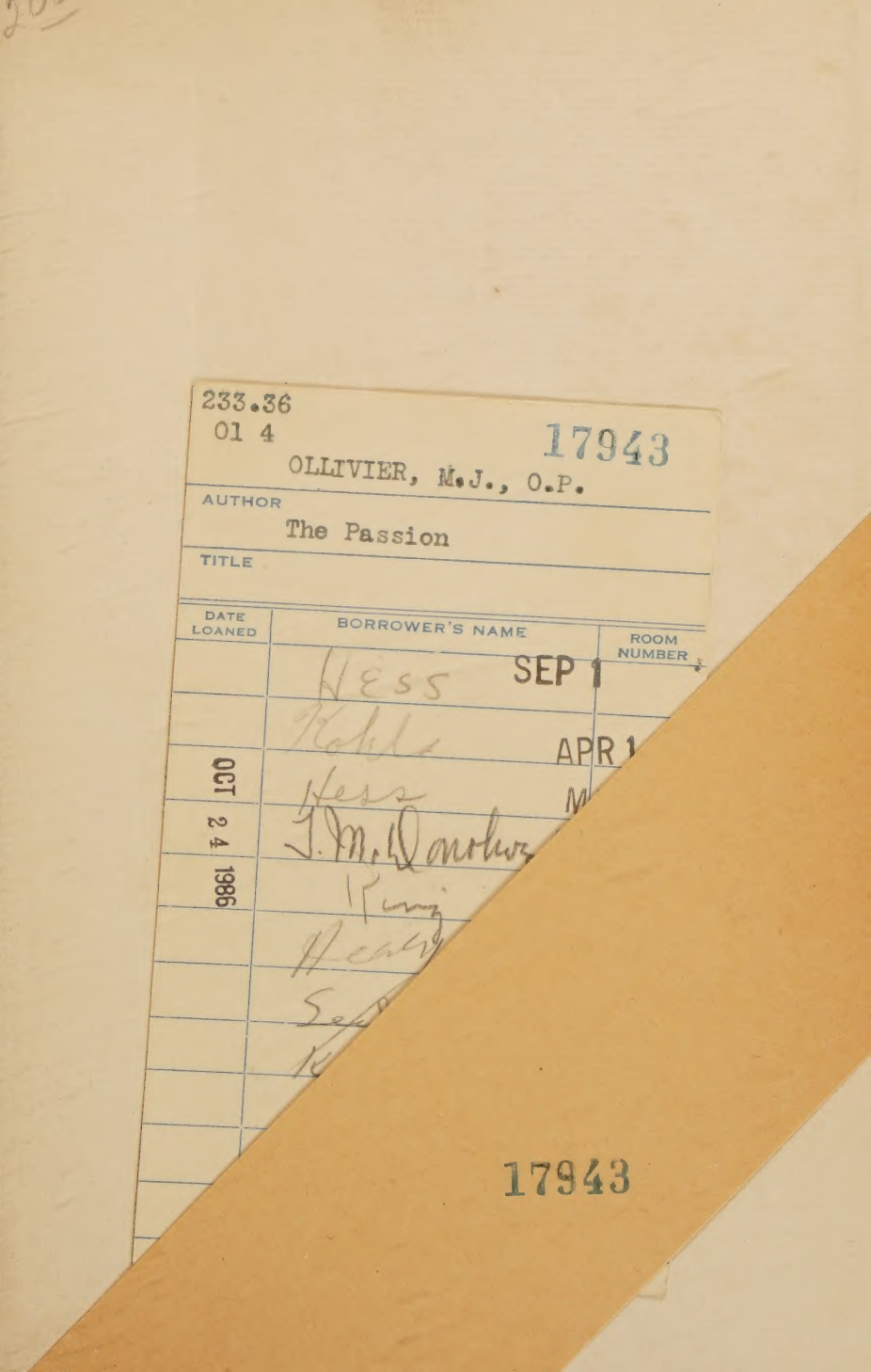
[3] I Cor. xv. 20–23. "But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep. For by a man *came* death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also, in Christ, all shall be made alive. . . . The first-fruits, Christ; then they that are of Christ, who have believed in his coming."

dead, who had corrupted the conscience of the guards, would not want to see, would not have seen, and, above all, would not render testimony in favor of that which they had been forced to admit. They had long been the enemies of the Truth, as it was represented by the Nazarene, and they included it in the outlawry to which they had condemned Him. Through their own fault, they were unworthy of any manifestation on the part of the Risen Christ, and when we think of them, the words rise naturally to our lips: "It is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs."[1]

The Saviour kept for His children the Bread of Eternal Life. Had He not a right to do this? Who then would dare to dictate to Him His Duty?

He was to stand once more in the midst of His Apostles, on the occasion of His final Appearance, at the moment when His earthly course would finish, namely, on the Day of His Ascension.[2] But the relation of it would add nothing to the certainty we now have of the victory of the Man-God over Death. Our task ends here, in joy, gratitude, and love: joy at His Triumph; gratitude for Our Redemption; and love of the Ineffable Goodness which has opened to us, at the cost of His Precious Blood, the Gates of a Blessed Eternity. Let us not lay it down without rendering Him, as it is fitting that we should, the homage of our faith, saying to Him with Job, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God. Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom."[3]

[1] MARK vii. 27.
[2] Id. xvi. 14–20; LUKE xxiv. 50–52.
[3] JOB xix. 25–27.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